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Is Rock 'n' Roll Ready For 1976?

Is 1976 Ready For Rock 'n' Roll?

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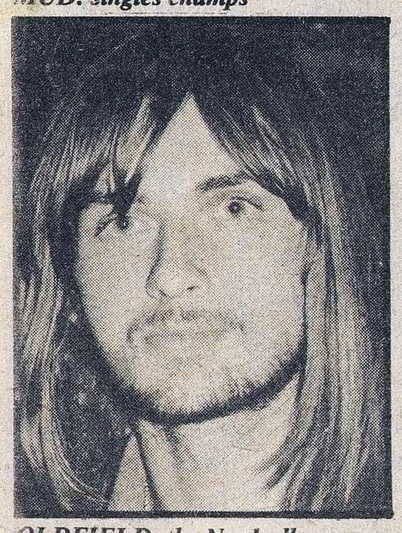
News Desk Edited: Derek Johnson

MUD: singles champs



OLDFIELD: the No. 1 album

NME'S 1975 CHART POINTS SURVEY

Oldfield 'Bells' top album; pips Stylistics by one point

IN WHAT HAS been the closest-ever finish in the 20-year history of the NME Chart Points Championship, Mike Oldfield's "Tubular Bells" emerges as the Top Ablum of 1975 — beating "The Best of The Stylistics" by one solitary point!

Oldfield looked to be a runaway winner in the early autumn, when he had built up a massive lead. But then "Bells" dropped out of the weekly charts, and he was forced to sit back and watch the Stylistics steadily closing the gap. In the final Album Top Thirty of 1975, the U.S. group needed to be placed at No. 23 to tie with Oldfield — or higher to win the title outright. In fact, they could only manage 24th spot!

So "Tubular Bells", originally issued in 1973 and placed third in last year's table, captures the coveted No. 1 position — thanks largely to its extensive exposure in the movie "The Exorcist". But full credit to the Stylistics for their consistency throughout the year.

MUD HEAD SINGLES

Another remarkable feat was that of the Carpenters, whose album "The Singles 1969-73" scooped second place in the 1974 table, and only drops to No. 4 this year! What's more, they have a second album in the Top Ten, with their "Horizon" figuring at No. 10.

And another "oldie" to retain its selling power this year has been Pink Floyd's "Dark Side Of The Moon", which was fourth a year ago and now finishes at No. 8. Their latest album "Wish You Were Here" is also well placed at No. 17.

Congratulations to the Bay City Rollers on securing two Top Ten entries in their first full year in the LP big-time. Also worthy of mention are the Eagles' high placing at No. 13 with "One Of These Nights" . . . Paul McCartney & Wings reaching No. 9 with "Venus And Mars", after winning last year's title with "Band On The Run" . . . and the perennial "Simon & Garfunkel's Greatest Hits" notching up its third successive year in the Top Twenty with a creditable 14th placing.

Elton John was the top album seller of the year, with four of his albums entering the charts and collecting a combined total of 1,418 points. He is followed by the Bay City Rollers (1,392 points), the Stylistics (1,230), the Carpenters (1,223) and Mike Oldfield (1,106). Altogether 187 different albums figured in the NME Chart during 1975.

WITH ALL THE furore that has surrounded the Bay City Rollers during 1975, it is an outstanding achievement on the part of Mud to have captured the Singles Championship from the Scottish lads. The Rollers won last year's title, but this time finish as runners-up — though, in fairness, it should be pointed out that Mud had one single more than the Rollers released during the past 12 months. Furthermore, the Rollers' total of 614 was higher than their 603 winning total in 1974!

A special mention for the Stylistics, who not only almost pulled off the Album title, but also climbed to a very worthy third place in the singles list. Additionally they are also the only American act to figure in the Top Ten — and that makes them the most consistent U.S. name in Britain, in terms of record sales, during 1975.

The Americans stage a comeback in the second half of the Top Twenty, with five entries — incuding Tammy Wynette at No. 11, which is an exceptionally high placing for a girl singer. This means that nine of the Top Ten acts are British, but only 14 of the Top Twenty!

David Essex improves on his 12th spot last year by moving up to No. 5 this time, and the only other acts to retain Top Twenty positions since 1974 are the Rubettes and Queen. In fact, it's hard luck on Queen that their "Bohemian Rhapsody" smash hit came at the tail end of the year, which means that many of the points it accrues will be carried forward into 1976; even so, they will doubtless be well pleased with their No. 15 spot.

Congratulations also to newcomers Kenny and Showaddywaddy, both of whom made a significant impact on the Top Ten —and to stalwarts David Bowie and Rod Stewart for maintaining their reputations by securing 7th and 8th places respectively. Also to 10 c.c. for unobtrusively sneaking into the Top Ten of both albums and singles' tables.

Last year, a new record was established for the number of different acts which appeared in the singles chart — 176 in all. But this record has again been broken in 1975, with no fewer than 190 acts cropping up in the Top Thirty. Which just goes to show how fickle were the record-buyers, dividing their loyalties between more acts than ever before!

FIRST HUNDRED ALBUMS

1.	TUBULAR BELLS (Mike Oldfield)	929
2.	BEST OF THE STYLISTICS	928
3.	ELTON JOHN'S GREATEST HITS	757
4.	THE SINGLES 1969-1973 (Carpenters)	709
5.	ONCE UPON A STAR (Bay City Rollers)	668
6.	THE ORIGINAL SOUNDTRACK (10 c.c.)	643
7.	ROLLIN' (Bay City Rollers)	638
8.	DARK SIDE OF THE MOON (Pink Floyd)	591
9.	VENUS AND MARS (Paul McCartney & Wings)	552
10.	HORIZON (Carpenters)	514
11.	Atlantic Crossing (Rod Stewart)	505
12.	Captain Fantastic (Elton John)	494
13.	One Of These Nights (Eagles)	479
14.	Simon & Garfunkel's Greatest Hits	440
15.	Cat Stevens' Greatest Hits	375
16.	Physical Graffiti (Led Zeppelin)	368
17.	Wish You Were Here (Pink Floyd)	342
18.	Engelbert Humperdinck's Greatest Hits	340
19.	Sheer Heart Attack (Queen)	327
20.	40 Golden Greats (Jim Reeves)	324
21.	Best Of Tammy Wynette	316
21.	Crime Of The Century (Supertramp)	316
23.	Tom Jones' 10th Anniversary Album/ 20 Greatest Hits	315
24.	Can't Get Enough (Barry White)	313
24.	The Very Best Of Roger Whittaker	313
26.	All The Fun Of The Fair (David Essex)	308
27.	The Shirley Bassey Singles Album	306
27.	Peters & Lee Favourites	306
29.	Straight Shooter (Bad Company)	294
30.	Thank You Baby (Stylistics)	290
31.	On The Level (Status Quo)	276
32.	The Myths And Legends of King Arthur And The Knights Of The Round Table (Rick Wakeman)	271
33.	Blue Jays (Justin Hayward & John Lodge)	256
34.	Perry Como's 40 Greatest Hits	250
35.	David Essex	243
36.	Elvis Presley's 40 Greatest Hits	203
37.	Autobahn (Kraftwerk)	201
37.	Band On The Run (Paul McCartney & Wings)	201
39.	Blood On The Tracks (Bob Dylan)	200
40.	Take Good Care Of Yourself (Three Degrees)	189
41.	24 Carat Purple (Deep Purple)	186
42.	Mud Rock II	175
43.	Ommadawn (Mike Oldfield)	173
44.	Siren (Roxy Music)	172
45.	Mud Rock	171
46.	All Around My Hat (Steeleye Span)	167
46.	Greatest Hits of 10 c.c.	167
48.	Another Year (Leo Sayer)	161
49.	Rock of The Westies (Elton John)	158
50.	The Best Years Of Our Lives (Steve Harley & Cockney Rebel)	157
51.	Just Another Way To Say I Love You (Barry White)	151
52.	Shaved Fish (John Lennon)	149
53.	Judith (Judy Collins)	144
53.	Average White Band	144
55.	Step Two (Showaddywaddy)	141
56.	Breakaway (Art Garfunkel)	139
56.	Fox	139
56.	Rock 'n' Roll (John Lennon)	139
59.	Get Dancing (Various Artists)	137
60.	Young Americans (David Bowie)	135
61.	And I Love You So (Perry Como)	123
62.	Ten Years Non Stop Jubilee (James Last)	122
63.	Sabotage (Black Sabbath)	120
64.	Stardust (Soundtrack)	118
65.	Make The Party Last (James Last)	116
65.	Relayer (Yes)	116
67.	A Night At The Opera (Queen)	115
68.	The Basement Tapes (Bob Dylan)	113
69.	Not Fragile (Bachman Turner Overdrive)	110
70.	Rubycon (Tangerine Dream)	103
71.	Souled Out (Various Artists)	101
71.	Showaddywaddy	101
73.	Tommy (Soundtrack)	98
74.	The Who By Numbers	95
75.	Smiler (Rod Stewart)	90
76.	Snowflakes Are Dancing (Tomita)	89
77.	Wouldn't You Like It (Bay City Rollers)	86
77.	His 12 Greatest Hits (Neil Diamond)	86
79.	We All Had Doctors Papers (Max Boyce)	83
79.	Made In The Shade (Rolling Stones)	83
81.	There's One In Every Crowd (Eric Clapton)	82
82.	Ride A Rock Horse (Roger Daltrey)	81
83.	E.C. Was Here (Eric Clapton)	80
83.	Good, Bad, But Beautiful (Shirley Bassey)	80
85.	Live (Alex Harvey Band)	76
85.	Rolled Gold (Rolling Stones)	76
87.	Slade In Flame	71
88.	Country Life (Roxy Music)	70
88.	Rainbow (Ritchie Blackmore)	70
90.	Crisis? What Crisis? (Supertramp)	67
91.	Still Crazy After All These Years (Paul Simon)	66
92.	Get Right In Tae Him (Billy Connolly)	65
93.	When Will I See You Again (Johnny Mathis)	63
94.	I Feel A Song (Gladys Knight & The Pips)	57
95.	Windsong (John Denver)	56
96.	The Snow Goose (Camel)	54
97.	Disco Hits '75 (Various Artists)	53
97.	Songs Of Joy (Nigel Brooks Singers)	53
99.	Cop Yer Whack (Billy Connolly)	52
99.	Streets (Ralph McTell)	52

BAY CITY ROLLERS receiving their London Weekend TV award as "Best Group of the Year" from Russell Harty.

THE STYLISTICS: runners-up in the album section, No. 3 in the singles table. Most consistent U.S. act of the year.

WYNETTE: top girl of 1975

THE SINGLES TABLE

1.	MUD	648
2.	BAY CITY ROLLERS	614
3.	STYLISTICS	583
4.	KENNY	473
5.	DAVID ESSEX	421
6.	SHOWADDYWADDY	407
7.	DAVID BOWIE	379
8.	ROD STEWART	370
8.	10 c.c.	370
10.	HOT CHOCOLATE	364
11.	Tammy Wynette	295
12.	Gladys Knight & the Pips	282
13.	Glitter Band	276
14.	The Goodies	272
15.	Queen	268
16.	Rubettes	267
17.	Mac & Katie Kissoon	262
18.	Carpenters	259
19.	Moments (incorporating 146 points scored as Moments & Whatnauts)	255
20.	Van McCoy	254
21.	Drifters	251
22.	Smokie	247
23.	Status Quo	246
24.	Elton John	245
25.	George McCrae	242
26.	Chi-Lites	239
27.	Fox	238
28.	Roger Whittaker	237
29.	Typically Tropical	234
30.	Sweet	233
31.	Gloria Gaynor	232
32.	Windsor Davies & Don Estelle	228
32.	Art Garfunkel	228
34.	Steve Harley & Cockney Rebel	227
35.	Johnny Nash	214
36.	Frankie Valli & the Four Seasons (see also under Frankie Valli)	211
37.	Gary Glitter	207
38.	Barry White	206
39.	Disco Tex & the Sex-O-Lettes	202
39.	Ray Stevens	202
41.	Elvis Presley	194
41.	Slade	194
43.	K.C. & the Sunshine Band	193
44.	Telly Savalas	185
45.	Pilot	183
46.	Guys & Dolls	178
47.	Bee Gees	175
47.	Tymes	175
49.	Abba	172
49.	Hamilton Bohannon	172
51.	Jasper Carrott	164
51.	Leo Sayer	164
53.	Billie Jo Spears	163
54.	Minnie Riperton	162
55.	Morris Albert	160
56.	Billy Connolly	156
56.	Bobby Goldsboro	156
58.	Roxy Music	155
59.	Jim Gilstrap	154
60.	Susan Cadogan	153
61.	Jim Capaldi	152
62.	Peter Shelley	150
63.	Osmonds	149
64.	Donny & Marie Osmond	147
64.	Brian Hyland	147
66.	5000 Volts	146
67.	Ralph McTell	145
68.	Glen Campbell	144
68.	John Lennon	144
70.	Tammy Jones	141
71.	Frankie Valli (See also under Frankie Valli & the Four Seasons)	138
72.	Jonathan King	137
73.	Judge Dread	134
74.	Paul McCartney & Wings	130
74.	Esther Phillips	130
76.	Average White Band	127
76.	Judy Collins	127
78.	Linda Lewis	126
79.	John Holt	124
80.	Shirley & Company	123
81.	Dana	121
81.	Steeleye Span	121
83.	Laurel & Hardy	115
84.	Helen Reddy	112
85.	David Cassidy	111
86.	Eagles	110
86.	Jigsaw	110
86.	Trammps	110
89.	Duane Eddy	108
90.	Hello	107
91.	Billy Swan	106
91.	Three Degrees	106
93.	Gilbert Becaud	104
93.	Justin Hayward & John Lodge	104
95.	Mike Batt	103
95.	Alex Harvey Band	103
95.	Pete Wingfield	103
98.	George Baker	102
99.	Carl Malcolm	101
100.	Kraftwerk	99
101.	Band of the Black Watch	96
102.	Johnny Mathis	95
103.	Bachman Turner Overdrive	94
104.	Mike Reid	93
105.	Wigan's Chosen Few	92
106.	Barry Manilow	91
106.	Wizzard	91
108.	Johnny Wakelin & the Kinshasa Band	90
109.	Adrian Baker	89
110.	Sparks	88
111.	Alvin Stardust	85
111.	Sweet Sensation	85
113.	Chubby Checker	83
114.	Bimbo Jet	82
114.	Syreeta	82
114.	Wombles	82
117.	Ian Hunter	80
117.	Demis Roussos	80
119.	Nazareth	77
119.	Supertramp	77
121.	Maxine Nightingale	75
122.	Gilbert O'Sullivan	71
122.	Wigan's Ovation	71
124.	Mike Harding	70
124.	Love Unlimited	70
126.	Teach-In	69
127.	Chris Spedding	68
128.	Greg Lake	66
129.	Shadows	64
129.	Stevie Wonder	64
131.	Procol Harum	63
132.	Faces	62
133.	Ken Boothe	61
133.	Roy Wood	61
135.	Labelle	58
135.	Stretch	58
137.	John Miles	57
138.	Biddu Orchestra	55
138.	Al Matthews	55
138.	Peter Skellern	55
141.	Linda Carr & the Love Squad	54
142.	Chris Hill	52
143.	Gary Benson	51
143.	Desmond Dekker	51
145.	T. Rex	48
146.	Dee Clark	47
146.	Bob Marley & the Wailers	47
148.	Bad Company	43
149.	Betty Wright	42
150.	Eric Clapton	40
150.	Andy Fairweather-Low	40
152.	Sister Sledge	38
153.	Stephanie de Sykes	37
154.	Al Green	34
155.	Blackbyrds	32
156.	Wayne Gibson	29
157.	Impressions	27
158.	Sailor	24
159.	John Asher	19
159.	Rimshots	19
161.	Jackie Wilson	17
162.	Austin Roberts	16
163.	Kevin Johnson	15
164.	Arrows	14
165.	Silver Convention	13
166.	Ken Dodd	12
166.	Doobie Brothers	12
168.	Yin & Yan	11
169.	Hamilton, Joe Frank & Reynolds	9
169.	Tami Lynn	9
171.	Diana Ross	8
171.	Small Faces	8
173.	Tony Camillo's Bazuka	7
174.	Rupie Edwards	6
174.	Fatback Band	6
176.	George Benson	4
176.	Major Harris	4
176.	Steely Dan	4
176.	Tam White	4
180.	Natalie Cole	3
180.	Kiki Dee Band	3
180.	Retta Young	3
183.	Chequers	2
183.	Captain & Tennille	2
183.	Lulu	2
183.	People's Choice	2
183.	Ritchie Family	2
188.	Jane Birkin	1
188.	Bill Howard	1
188.	53rd & 3rd	1

The NME Chart Points Tables are compiled by awarding marks to every entry in the Top Thirty, week-by-week throughout the year. Thirty points are awarded for a No. 1 position, 29 points for a No. 2 placing — and so on, down to one point for a No. 30 position.

NEWS BRIEFS

● **URIAH HEEP** commence a 12-day European tour on February 12 visiting Sweden, Denmark, Germany, Holland, Switzerland and Norway. Immediately prior to this, singer David Byron flies to America for two weeks to promote his solo album "Take No Prisoners".

● **TINA TURNER** has a solo single released by United Artists on January 16. It is Pete Townshend's "Acid Queen" from his rock opera "Tommy", and is extracted from her latest album of the same name. Flip side of the single is husband Ike's "Rockin' And Rollin'."

● **PAPER LACE** have undergone a major personnel upheaval, retaining only two of their original members, Phil Wright (lead vocals and drums) and Cliff Fish (bass and backing vocals). They have now been joined by former New Seekers member Peter Oliver and ex-Merlin guitarist Jamie Moses. The new-look group make their live debut this Sunday, when they open for a week in cabaret at London Camden Nero's.

● **BARNEY JAMES**, the drummer-cum-actor who was formerly with Rick Wakeman's English Rock Ensemble, has shelved plans for a concept album based on Viking mythology. Instead he will concentrate initially on a solid rock format with his newly-formed four-piece band, who have already cut a single for January release and have started work on their debut album.

● **BOBBY WOMACK** has a single titled "Where There's A Will There's A Way" issued by United Artists on January 16. It is taken from his new eight-track album "Safety Zone" which follows on February 6. There is a possibility of a promotional British visit by Womack in February.

● **SHIRLEY MacLAINE** is to present her new musical revue at the London Palladium for a two-week season, starting February 2. This will be the opening engagement of a world tour by the Hollywood star. And it means that the current Palladium presentation, "Peter Pan" starring Lulu, will close on January 31.

● **JIM CAPALDI** has scrapped plans for a solo British concert tour. NME reported last week that it was being lined up to start at the end of January and, in fact, dates had already been pencilled in. But a spokesman said this week that "it had proved impossible to get the tour together".

● **"HOUND DOG" TAYLOR**, the veteran American blues guitarist and songwriter, has died in Chicago. He had been in hospital for six weeks suffering from lung cancer, and was aged 59. Theodore "Hound Dog" Taylor is survived by his wife and four sons.

● **DONALD BYRD** has a solo single released on the Blue Note label on January 9. It is a double-sided version of "Change (Makes You Want To Hustle)" and comes from his album "Places And Spaces", which follows on January 16. These releases tie in with Byrd's British tour with the Blackbyrds.

● **CURVED AIR** are the opening attraction at a new rock venue in Nelson on January 9. Called Nelson's Column, it has a 4,000 capacity and will be one of the largest venues in the North. This replaces Air's previously-reported January 9 gig in Burnley.

● **PILOT** fly to Australia in mid-January to record their new album, under the supervision of Queen's producer Roy Thomas Baker. The band's next British tour is being lined up for the spring.

● **STEVIE WONDER** has not yet been able to finalise the period of his projected British visit. This is because he is involved in discussions with Tamla Motown over his new contact with the label and, as a result, the release of his double album has been delayed. His visit will be set to tie in with the album, when it does eventually come out, but it is now unlikely to be until the spring.

● **TANYA TUCKER** is in line for a short British tour in March, when she is expected to play about six dates here. Meanwhile, her second MCA album "Lovin' And Learnin'" is scheduled for release in early February.

● **GONG** have parted company with guitarist Steve Hillage, less than a year after Daevid Allen quit the band. They are continuing to play gigs on the Continent, even though no replacement has yet been taken on. Hillage intends to pursue a solo career. Gong's new album "Shamal" is released by Virgin on February 13, and a single taken from it will also come out then.

● **THIN LIZZY** are spending the greater part of this month recording an album for March release, to coincide with a major British tour. But they will be playing just three gigs in January — at Coventry Warwick University (16), Leeds University (17) and Wolverhampton Civic Hall (25).

MORE TOURS

NEIL INNES
and Fatso are going out on a nationwide club and college tour. Dates so far confirmed are London Peckham Newlands Tavern (January 6 and 7), Doncaster Outlook (12), Huddersfield Ivanhoe's (13), St. Andrew's University (15), Paisley College (16), Halifax Clarence's (17), Sheffield Black Swan (18), Sutton-in-Ashfield Golden Diamond (19), Brighton Technical College (23), Harrow Tithe Farm House (25), Dudley JB's Club (February 6), Hull University (7), Paignton Penelope's (14) and Aberystwyth University (16). More gigs are being finalised.

SNAFU
set out this month on their own solo tour of clubs and colleges. This follows their autumn concert tour as support act to Nazareth. They visit Newcastle Polytechnic (January 9), Northampton County Ground (10), Derby Cleopatra's (15), Scarborough Penthouse (16), Hull University (17), Nottingham Trent Polytechnic (20), Dunstable Civic Hall (22), Dagenham Roundhouse (24), Sutton-in-Ashfield Golden Diamond (26), Cardiff Top Rank (27), Plymouth (28), Bristol Polytechic (30) and Cambridge Sports Hall (31). Snafu subsequently set out on an American tour.

TROGGS
will be playing a lengthy tour of clubs and colleges, spread over the first three months of 1976. Gigs so far confirmed are Southend Talk of the South (January 6), London Enfield Middlesex Polytechnic (22), London Central Polytechnic (23), Northampton Salon (28), Buckley Tivoli (29), Aberystwyth University (February 2), Weybridge College of Food (14), Jersey Behan's (March 10-13), Derby Tiffany's (18), Coventry College of Education (19), Sunderland Polytechnic (20), Folkestone Toby House (25) and Retford Porterhouse (27). Many more dates are still being finalised.

EDDIE BURNS
returns to Britain this month to promote his new Big Bear album "Detroit Blackbottom". Gigs so far set for the veteran U.S. blues guitarist are at Leicester Polytechnic (January 16), London University College (17), London Camden Dingwalls (20), Birmingham Aston University (23), Manchester University (24), Bangor University (25), Cambridge University (27), Durham University (30), Newcastle University (31), London Kensington The Nashville (February 1), Milton Keynes Open University (3) and Middlesbrough Town Hall (7). He will also be appearing on TV and radio.

NUCLEUS
are going out on tour this month, featuring an act built largely around their current "Alley Cat" album. Ian Carr and the group visit Basildon Sweeney's (January 14), London Ealing Technical College (15), Egham Royal Holloway College (16), Salford University (17), Swindon Technical College (23), Exeter University (24), Lampeter St. David's University College (30), Leicester University (31), Brighton Sussex University (February 6), Uxbridge Brunel University (13), Chelmsford Mid-Essex Technical College (14), Loughborough University (18), Middlesbrough Teesside Polytechnic (19), Coventry Lanchester Polytechnic (20) and Birmingham University (21).

A picture from the NME archives . . . the SMALL FACES, circa 1967. Will they get together again this year? It's possible, but by no means definite. Now read on . . .

Small Faces reunion snag

THE EAGERLY AWAITED Small Faces reunion — which has been the subject of speculation for almost a year, and seemed close to fulfilment with the news of Rod Stewart's split from the Faces — was no closer to materialising this week. It appears highly probable that a reunion will take place some time this year, but the prospect of a permanent Small Faces get-together is now considered doubtful.

There are two major obstacles to a long-term reunion. The first is that both Ronnie Lane and Steve Marriott are currently fronting their own groups, and both are apparently keen to pursue this approach. The second is the difficulty which the Small Faces would have in recording together — with Lane contracted to Island, Marriott to A & M, and both Kenny Jones and Ian MacLagan (as members of the Faces) to Warner Brothers.

A spoksman for Ronnie Lane commented: "I am confident that a Small Faces reunion will come about in 1976, but probably just for one or two gigs. There's no question of Ronnie giving up his own band, because he is very much into Slim Chance."

A & M Records, speaking on Marriott's behalf, expressed similar sentiments. A spokesman said: "At no time have all the Small Faces got together and discussed this project, so everything is speculative at this stage."

There is still no word from the Faces' management regarding the future plans of Jones, MacLagan and Tetsu. It seems likely that the former two would welcome a permanent Small Face reunion, but they may well be thwarted by the attitude of Lane and Marriott.

And at presstime, Ron Wood had still not become an official member of the Rolling Stones.

Gallagher & Lyle dates

DATES AND VENUES have been confirmed for the British concert tour by Gallagher & Lyle, plans for which were reported last week. They visit Newcastle City Hall (January 20), Aberdeen Music Hall (22), Edinburgh Usher Hall (24), Glasgow Apollo Centre (25), Motherwell Civic Centre (26), Guildford Civic Hall (31), London Victoria Palace (February 1), Leeds Town Hall (4), Manchester Free Trade Hall (6) and Birmingham Town Hall (7).

Promoter is Peter Bowyer, who sees the tour as a launch pad for a major breakthrough by the duo. And to tie in with their dates, A & M are releasing their new album "Breakaway" on January 23. This will be preceded on January 16 by a single extracted from the LP, titled "I Wanna Stay With You".

Benny Gallagher (featured on guitar and keyboards) and Graham Lyle (guitar) will have five other musicians accompanying them on the road. They are Jimmy Jewel (sax), John Mumford (trombone), Ian Rae (keyboards), Alan Hornall (bass) and Ray Duffy (drums).

RENAISSANCE-BRITISH TOUR

RENAISSANCE this month begin their first full British tour for over a year. They played a handful of concerts with Caravan last March, then headlined a couple of one-off gigs during the autumn.

But their commitments in America, where they are a major box-office attraction, kept them out of the country for most of 1975.

So far set are Aylesbury Friars at Vale Hall (January 10), Croydon Greyhound (11), Swansea University (15), Cardiff University (16), Bristol University (17), Kingston Coronation Hall (18), Uxbridge Brunel University (23), Nottingham University (24), Liverpool University (28), Rugby Lanchester Polytechnic (30) and London Imperial College (31).

More dates have still to be finalised, including a major London concert, prior to the band leaving for a European tour at the end of February. Meanwhile, Renaissance are completing the mixing of their live double album, which was recorded during their three sell-out concerts at New York's Carnegie Hall last June.

Sassafras in concert

SASSAFRAS — who recently completed the "Hot On The Trails" package tour with A Band Called 'O' and Randy Pie — are to headline their own British tour during the first three months of 1976 as follows:

Treforest Glamorgan Polytechnic (January 8), Harlow Technical College (10), Aberdeen Palace Theatre (15), Glasgow University (16), London Hampstead Westfield College (24), London Twickenham Winning Post (25), High Wycombe Town Hall (26), Barry Memorial Hall (29), Carmarthen Trinity College (30), Reading University (31), London Chalk Farm Roundhouse (February 1), Crawley College of Education (6) and Manchester University (7).

More dates are at present being finalised, running through to the end of March.

Who plan gigs at football grounds

THE WHO will be headlining at least two major open-air concerts at leading British football grounds this summer. These plans were revealed by Roger Daltrey at London's Hammersmith Odeon on Tuesday of last week, when the band played the third and last of their three pre-Christmas concerts. Backstage, Daltrey added that the Who have given the go-ahead for these outdoor concerts to be lined up, but that he did not have any further details at this stage. After Christmas, a Who spokesman confirmed that the idea is being put into effect. He commented: "It's far too early to give any precise information. But there will probably be one concert at a London soccer ground — and one, possibly more, in the provinces."

REBEL DATES IN FEBRUARY

THE FULL FEBRUARY date sheet has now been confirmed for the British concert tour by Steve Harley and Cockney Rebel. They visit Glasgow Apollo Centre (February 9 and 10), Newcastle City Hall (12 and 13), Liverpool Empire (15), Manchester Free Trade Hall (16), Birmingham Odeon (18 and 19), Bristol Colston Hall (21 and 22), Sheffield City Hall (24) and Leeds University (26 and 27).

Tickets are on sale now at all venues priced £2.50, £2, £1.50 and £1 — the only exception being Leeds, where tickets are all at the one price of £1.75. And to tie in with the tour, the band's new EMI album "Timeless Flight" is released on January 30.

No London dates are included in the above schedule but, as reported three weeks ago, Rebel are planning at least one concert at Wembley Empire Pool in April. They are expected to appear at this venue on April 9, with the possibility of further concerts on the two successive days.

Rebel, who returned from the States shortly before Christmas, are planning to go back to America in the spring. Meanwhile, they are playing TV dates in Europe during January, followed by a full tour of the Continent in March.

Be-Bop: major 28-venue tour

BE-BOP DELUXE set out later this month on their most important British tour to date, visiting many of the country's biggest venues, including a major London concert at Drury Lane's celebrated Theatre Royal. So far 28 gigs have been finalised, with the likelihood of more being added. Their confirmed itinerary comprises:

Kirkcaldy College (January 22), Aberdeen Robert Gordon Institute (23), Glasgow Strathclyde University (24), Redcar Coatham Bowl (25), Plymouth Leisure Centre (27), Norwich East Anglia University (30), Northampton County Ground (31), Shrewsbury Music Hall (February 3), Leeds Universtiy (4), Sheffield City Hall (5), Birmingham Town Hall (7), London Drury Lane Theatre Royal (8), Bradford St. George's Hall (12), Cambridge Corn Exchange (13), Manchester Free Trade Hall (14), Swindon Leisure Centre (15), Swansea Brangwyn Hall (16), Hull City Hall (17), Oxford Polytechnic (19), Bristol Colston Hall (20), Southend Kursaal (21), Hemel Hempstead Pavilion (22), Brighton Dome (23), Portsmouth Guildhall (24), Guildford Civic Hall (25), Malvern Winter Gardens (26), Newcastle Mayfair (27) and Liverpool Stadium (28).

The band's new album "Sunburst Finish" is relased by Harvest on January 16 (see page 25 for a picture of the sleeve). And a single extracted from the LP, titled "Ships In The Night", comes out the previous week (9).

U.S. VISITORS

Berry

CHUCK BERRY returns to this country in May for a string of concert dates, which have been set up by promoter Mervyn Conn as part of a full European tour. He visits Liverpool Empire (May 14), Newcastle City Hall (15), London Lewisham Odeon (17), Belfast (18), Dublin (19), Birmingham Odeon (20), Sheffield City Hall (21) and London Hammersmith Odeon (22).

Ozarks

SIX MAJOR concerts were this week confirmed for the Ozark Mountain Daredevils, following their previously-announced appearance in the International Festival of Country Music at Wembley Empire Pool at Easter. The possibility of a short Ozarks tour has been rumoured for some weeks, but the band's offical acceptance has only just been received. Dates are Glasgow Apollo Centre (April 30), Leeds Town Hall (May 1), Liverpool Empire (2), Sheffield City Hall (3), Birmingham Town Hall (4), and London Hammersmith Odeon (5).

Emmylou

DATES AND VENUES have now been confirmed for the previously-reported British concert tour in February by Emmylou Harris. She will be supported throughout by the Hot Band, who backed her on her only previous British date — a London concert in November. She visits Brighton Dome (February 12), Southampton Gaumont (13), Bristol Hippodrome (15), Glasgow Apollo Centre (16), Edinburgh Usher Hall (17), Liverpool Empire (18), Manchester Free Trade Hall (19), Birmingham Odeon (20), Leicester De Montfort Hall (21) and London Hammersmith Odeon (22). Tickets, priced from £1 to £2.50, go on sale at all venues tomorrow (Friday). Release date of the new Emmylou album, already named as "Elite Hotel", is now officially set for January 16.

Choice

PEOPLE'S CHOICE, the seven-piece American soul outfit, have been lined up for a British tour by promoter Henry Sellers. The group scored a massive hit in America with their single "Do It Any Way You Wanna", which also made the NME Chart a few weeks ago. Confirmed dates are Birmingham Barbarella's (January 16), Bristol Yate Stirling Suite (17), Stafford Top Of The World (19), Southend Zero Six (21), Halesowen Tiffany's (22), Whitley Bay Sands and Spennymoor Top Hat (23), Dunstable California (24), Hanley Bailey's (26), Farnborough Burlesque (28), Shrewsbury Tiffany's (February 2), Derby Bailey's (3), and Watford Bailey's (4). Their new album "Boogie Down U.S." is now on release.

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Elton John's Greatest Hits	£1.95	Rhythm Guitar (Self Tutor)	£1.95
Status Quo/42 Songs	£2.00	Lead Guitar Tutor with Record	£2.50
Bob Dylan/Blood on the Tracks	£2.00	Rock Bass Tutor with Record	£2.50
R. Wakeman/King Arthur	£1.95	Bottleneck Gtr. Tutor with Record	£2.25
Eagles/21 Songs	£3.30	7488 Guitar Chords	£2.50
Queen/Sheer Heart Attack	£1.00	Bolan/Warlock of Love	95p
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NME Book of Rock	75p	Dylan/Writings & Drawings	£2.50
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FIVE YEARS AGO

Week ending January 13, 1971

Last Week	This Week		
1	1	GRANDAD	Clive Dunn (Columbia)
2	2	WHEN I'M DEAD AND GONE	McGuiness Flint (Capitol)
3	3	RIDE A WHITE SWAN	T. Rex (Fly)
4	4	I HEAR YOU KNOCKING	Dave Edmunds (MAM)
9	5	I'LL BE THERE	Jackson Five (Tamla Motown)
6	6	IT'S ONLY MAKE BELIEVE	Glen Campbell (Capitol)
5	7	CRACKLIN' ROSIE	Neil Diamond (UNI)
7	8	NOTHING RHYMED	Gilbert O'Sullivan (MAM)
10	9	(BLAME IT ON THE) PONY EXPRESS	Johnny Johnson And The Bandwagon (Bell)
8	10	HOME LOVING MAN	Andy Williams (CBS)

TEN YEARS AGO

Week ending January 12, 1966

Last Week	This Week		
2	1	KEEP ON RUNNING	Spencer Davis (Fontana)
1	2	DAY TRIPPER/WE CAN WORK IT OUT	Beatles (Parlophone)
3	3	THE RIVER	Ken Dodd (Columbia)
5	4	MY SHIP IS COMING IN	Walker Brothers (Philips)
4	5	THE CARNIVAL IS OVER	Seekers (Columbia)
8	6	LET'S HANG ON	Four Seasons (Philips)
18	7	SPANISH FLEA	Herb Alpert & the Tijuana Brass (Pye Int.)
10	8	TILL THE END OF THE DAY	Kinks (Pye)
16	9	A MUST TO AVOID	Herman's Hermits (Columbia)
7	10	RESCUE ME	Fontella Bass (Chess)

15 YEARS AGO

Week ending January 13, 1961

Last Week	This Week		
1	1	POETRY IN MOTION	Johnny Tillotson (London)
3	2	I LOVE YOU	Cliff Richard (Columbia)
2	3	SAVE THE LAST DANCE FOR ME	Drifters (London)
4	4	IT'S NOW OR NEVER	Elvis Presley (RCA)
8	5	PERFIDIA	Ventures (London)
13	6	PORTRAIT OF MY LOVE	Matt Monro (Parlophone)
12	7	COUNTING TEARDROPS	Emile Ford (Pye)
5	8	LONELY PUP	Adam Faith (Parlophone)
7	9	GOODNESS GRACIOUS ME	Peter Sellers & Sophia Loren (Parlophone)
11	10	BLUE ANGEL	Roy Orbison (London)

NEW MUSICAL EXPRESS C·H·A·R·T·S

SINGLES

Tuesday, 30th December 1975

This Week	Last Week			Weeks in Chart	Highest Position
1	(1)	BOHEMIAN RHAPSODY	Queen (EMI)	8	1
2	(2)	I BELIEVE IN FATHER CHRISTMAS	Greg Lake (Manticore)	4	2
3	(6)	IT'S GONNA BE A COLD COLD CHRISTMAS	Dana (GTO)	3	3
4	(3)	THE TRAIL OF THE LONESOME PINE	Laurel & Hardy (United Artists)	6	2
5	(4)	LET'S TWIST AGAIN/THE TWIST	Chubby Checker (London)	5	4
6	(5)	HAPPY TO BE ON AN ISLAND IN THE SUN	Demis Roussos (Philips)	6	5
7	(8)	NA NA IS THE SADDEST WORD	Stylistics (Avco)	6	5
8	(7)	YOU SEXY THING	Hot Chocolate (Rak)	9	1
9	(13)	WIDE EYED AND LEGLESS	Andy Fairweather Low (A & M)	4	9
10	(9)	GOLDEN YEARS	David Bowie (RCA)	5	9
11	(15)	GLASS OF CHAMPAGNE	Sailor (Epic)	3	11
12	(16)	ART FOR ART'S SAKE	10 c.c. (Mercury)	5	12
13	(17)	CAN I TAKE YOU HOME LITTLE GIRL	Drifters (Bell)	5	13
14	(10)	SHOW ME YOU'RE A WOMAN	Mud (Private Stock)	5	8
15	(11)	RENTA SANTA	Chris Hill (Philips)	4	11
16	(20)	IF I COULD	David Essex (CBS)	4	16
17	(12)	ALL AROUND MY HAT	Steeleye Span (Chrysalis)	7	6
18	(—)	IN DULCE JUBILO/ON HORSEBACK	Mike Oldfield (Virgin)	1	18
19	(25)	MAMA MIA	Abba (Epic)	3	19
20	(23)	ITCHYCOO PARK	Small Faces (Immediate)	2	20
21	(21)	MAKE A DAFT NOISE FOR CHRISTMAS	Goodies (Bradley)	3	21
22	(14)	MONEY HONEY	Bay City Rollers (Bell)	7	3
23	(24)	CHRISTMAS IN DREADLAND/COME OUTSIDE	Judge Dread (Cactus)	2	23
24	(27)	DO THE BUS STOP	Fatback Band (Polydor)	3	24
25	(19)	FIRST IMPRESSIONS	Impressions (Curtom)	4	19
26	(22)	(THINK OF ME) WHEREVER YOU ARE	Ken Dodd (EMI)	3	22
27	(18)	THIS OLD HEART OF MINE	Rod Stewart (Riva)	8	5
28	(30)	KING OF THE COPS	Bill Howard (Penny Farthing)	2	28
29	(—)	BOTH ENDS BURNING	Roxy Music (Island)	1	29
30	(—)	LET'S WOMBLE TO THE PARTY TONIGHT	Wombles (CBS)	1	30

ALBUMS

Tuesday, 30th December 1975

This Week	Last Week			Weeks in Chart	Highest Position
1	(1)	A NIGHT AT THE OPERA	Queen (EMI)	5	1
2	(2)	PERRY COMO'S 40 GREATEST HITS	(K-Tel)	11	1
3	(5)	MAKE THE PARTY LAST	James Last (Polydor)	7	3
4	(3)	40 GOLDEN GREATS	Jim Reeves (Arcade)	14	1
5	(4)	WOULDN'T YOU LIKE IT?	Bay City Rollers (Bell)	5	4
6	(6)	24 ORIGINAL HITS	Drifters (Atlantic)	4	6
7	(8)	OMMADAWN	Mike Oldfield (Virgin)	9	4
8	(7)	PETERS & LEE FAVOURITES	(Philips)	14	3
9	(9)	ATLANTIC CROSSING	Rod Stewart (Warner Bros.)	20	1
10	(14)	ALL THE FUN OF THE FAIR	David Essex (CBS)	16	3
11	(22)	40 SUPER GREATS	(K-Tel)	3	11
12	(16)	GET RIGHT INTAE HIM	Billy Connolly (Polydor)	6	11
13	(11)	SONGS OF JOY	Nigel Brooks Singers (K-Tel)	5	11
14	(13)	ALL AROUND MY HAT	Steeleye Span (Chrysalis)	9	6
15	(15)	ELVIS PRESLEY'S 40 GREATEST HITS	(Arcade)	22	2
16	(20)	DISCO HITS '75	(Arcade)	8	15
17	(12)	ROLLED GOLD	Rolling Stones (Decca)	5	7
18	(10)	SHAVED FISH	John Lennon (Apple)	8	6
19	(24)	BEST OF STYLISTICS	(Avco)	38	1
20	(19)	WALT DISNEY GREATEST HITS	(Ronco)	3	19
21	(18)	WISH YOU WERE HERE	Pink Floyd (Harvest)	16	1
22	(17)	CRISIS? WHAT CRISIS?	Supertramp (A & M)	5	10
23	(23)	ONE OF THESE NIGHTS	Eagles (Asylum)	27	4
24	(—)	SUPERSONIC	(Stallion)	1	24
25	(—)	GOOFY GREATS	(K-Tel)	3	20
26	(—)	BREAKAWAY	Art Garfunkel (CBS)	8	6
27	(21)	BARRY WHITE'S GREATEST HITS	(20th Century)	6	20
28	(26)	THE VERY BEST OF ROGER WHITTAKER	(EMI)	18	4
29	(—)	FISH OUT OF WATER	Chris Squire (Atlantic)	1	29
30	(28)	SIMON & GARFUNKEL GREATEST HITS	(CBS)	157	1

U.S. SINGLES

30th December, 1975

This Week	Last Week		
1	(2)	I WRITE THE SONGS	Barry Manilow
2	(3)	THEME FROM MAHOGANY	Diana Ross
3	(4)	CONVOY	C. W. McCall
4	(1)	SATURDAY NIGHT	Bay City Rollers
5	(6)	LOVE ROLLERCOASTER	Ohio Players
6	(8)	FOX ON THE RUN	Sweet
7	(9)	FLY AWAY	John Denver
8	(11)	YOU SEXY THING	Hot Chocolate
9	(10)	I LOVE MUSIC	O'Jays
10	(12)	WALK AWAY FROM LOVE	David Ruffin
11	(7)	THAT'S THE WAY I LIKE IT	K. C. & The Sunshine Band
12	(14)	SING A SONG	Earth, Wind & Fire
13	(5)	LET'S DO IT AGAIN	Staple Singers
14	(16)	BREAKING UP IS HARD TO DO	Neil Sedaka
15	(22)	50 WAYS TO LEAVE YOUR LOVER	Paul Simon
16	(18)	EVIL WOMAN	Electric Light Orchestra
17	(20)	LOVE MACHINE	Miracles
18	(19)	OVER MY HEAD	Fleetwood Mac
19	(21)	COUNTRY BOY	Glen Campbell
20	(23)	ROCK 'N' ROLL ALL NIGHT	Kiss
21	(24)	WINNERS & LOSERS	Hamilton, Joe Frank & Reynolds
22	(26)	TIMES OF YOUR LIFE	Paul Anka
23	(13)	FLY ROBIN FLY	Silver Convention
24	(—)	I LOVE TO LOVE YOU BABY	Donna Summer
25	(15)	SKY HIGH	Jigsaw
26	(29)	SQUEEZE BOX	The Who
27	(28)	HURRICANE (PART 1)	Bob Dylan
28	(—)	LOVE HURTS	Nazareth
29	(—)	PALOMA BLANCA	George Baker
30	(—)	BABY FACE	Wing & A Prayer

Courtesy "CASH BOX"

U.S. ALBUMS

30th December 1975

This Week	Last Week		
1	(1)	CHICAGO'S GREATEST HITS	
2	(2)	ROCK OF THE WESTIES	Elton John
3	(3)	RED OCTOPUS	Jefferson Starship
4	(5)	HISTORY — AMERICA'S GREATEST HITS	
5	(6)	HISSING OF SUMMER LAWNS	Joni Mitchell
6	(4)	WINDSONG	John Denver
7	(8)	GRATITUDE	Earth, Wind & Fire
8	(7)	STILL CRAZY AFTER ALL THESE YEARS	Paul Simon
9	(12)	ONE OF THESE NIGHTS	Eagles
10	(9)	K.C. & THE SUNSHINE BAND	
11	(11)	BREAKAWAY	Art Garfunkel
12	(16)	ROCKY MOUNTAIN CHRISTMAS	John Denver
13	(14)	ALIVE	Kiss
14	(15)	FAMILY REUNION	O'Jays
15	(10)	SEALS & CROFTS GREATEST HITS	
16	(13)	TRYIN' TO GET THE FEELING	Barry Manilow
17	(22)	THE WHO BY NUMBERS	
18	(18)	WIND ON THE WATER	David Crosby/Graham Nash
19	(24)	HELEN REDDY'S GREATEST HITS	
20	(17)	SAVE ME	Silver Convention
21	(19)	LAZY AFTERNOON	Barbra Streisand
22	(25)	NUMBERS	Cat Stevens
23	(20)	WISH YOU WERE HERE	Pink Floyd
24	(30)	FLEETWOOD MAC	
25	(23)	FEELS SO GOOD	Grover Washington Jr.
26	(27)	BEST OF CARLY SIMON	
27	(28)	ZUMA	Neil Young
28	(26)	BARRY WHITE'S GREATEST HITS	
29	(—)	CLEARLY LOVE	Olivia Newton-John
30	(—)	MAHOGANY	Soundtrack

Courtesy "CASH BOX"

FAITH AND BEGOB!

Words:
Pete
Erskine

Pix:
Pennie
Smith

I'm a lumberjack and I'm OK bejasus – except for my rotting guitar, my dirty shirts and my salt-in-the-blood problem...

IT IS popularly supposed that Rory Gallagher is the Morris Minor of rock 'n' roll entertainers.

So it is especially droll to note that John McLaughlin once took it upon himself to reprimand him for his attitude to his audiences.

Late last summer the two bands found themselves among the inventory of artistes booked for an open air fest in L.A.

One of Rory's band had just tipped an ice bucket over the head of a passing roadie.

McLaughlin — who had previously remained mum to Gallagher's 'how you doing John?' because the former had omitted the Mahavishnu prefix — sidled across, radiating his characteristic washday radiance, had taken Rory by the arm and pointed out that "as an entertainer, do you not realise that you have a responsibility towards uplifting the consciousness of your audience?"

Readers may note that several weeks later McLaughlin suffered a brain-storm and renounced his faith via a half bottle of Teachers.

While, Rory, of course, soldiered on. With only a lumbercheck shirt, a Stratocaster and bills for broken seats to keep him company.

Why, only two weeks ago Rory played an entire set solo in Birmingham because his band couldn't get through the fog. The following morning he cut his index finger shaving. Undeterred, he took the stage that night with plectrum clutched between fore and third fingers.

"You go on stage," says Rory modestly, "and the Judy Garland thing hits you and you don't feel the pain any more."

The assembled company cracks up. Rory is not the grey dullard most people would have you believe.

"Essentially," he adds, "I'm a solo artist anyway."

And the Last Of The Progressive Blues Artistes to boot, eh?

"I'm a blues freak certainly, but I don't think you're doing The Blues a service by simply apeing old blues stuff.

"In any case . . . some of the bands within the Blue Horizon School of Motoring didn't see us as Part Of It.

"They saw us as . . ."

Heavy Metal?

"Yes."

I'll bet.

Rory Gallagher is sitting amongst the chocolate digestives in the boardroom of his new record company high above London's bustling Oxford Street . . . etc. etc.

He has yet to claim that "the new record's *really us,* man," mainly because he never addresses any one as "man". Rather he comes over as a cross between venerable Chief Sub Jack Scott and the Peter Sellers caricature of the archetypal Blarney Stone Irishman.

His debut album for Chrysalis, "Against The Grain" is his seventh. While it reveals few changes in his rather conservative blues/rock/heavy metal musical formula, it does indicate for the first time that Rory is finally coming round to the idea that the recording studio can be honestly exploited — without pulling a fast one on the fans.

"This time we had a long gap. We rehearsed all summer in a nice roomy studio. The first two albums I did after Taste broke up were when we were a three-piece. We tried to do the vocals and the guitar live.

"It was an idealistic approach. But I'd still rather do that than put the lead guitar on in New York and the drums in L.A.

"I like to keep it gritty."

When pressed on this rather nebulous point, Gallagher refers you back to his Hamburg and Belfast pre-Taste days. (Although, at this point in the early sixties, Gallagher was hardly your average guitar greenhorn, having purchased his first instrument for £4 10s from the Cork branch of F. W. Woolworth.)

"I remember we were depping for a group called The Fendermen in Hamburg," he recalls, sipping Waitrose wine from a crumpled paper cup. "We had to pretend we were them for a night or two.

"To get the booking we'd sent them a photograph of us as a four-piece — with a friend of ours standing at the organ like this" (he affects a Wakemanesque straining-and-soaring pose). "He was tone deaf. The thing was . . . the only trio popular at the time was the Big Three. The general idea was that the more players in the band meant the better the band was.

"So we turned up and told the promoter that the organist got sick on the ferry."

Prior to this Rory had raved the Irish ballroom circuit here within the Impact (nee Fontana) Showband. The drummer did a country and western spot "because he sang like Jim Reeves", the bass player and the rhythm guitarist covered contemporary Top Twenty material, while one of the horn players took care of the Barron Knights routine.

Rory did Eddie Cochran impersonations.

"The Irish love to dance," Rory explains, "and they like bands who're versatile on a Saturday night."

HIS NEXT move was the formation of the Cream-orientated power trio Taste in 1965. They arrived here in 1969, signed with Polydor, Got Big Quick, their final album (they

● *Continued on page 6*

CAPITAL RADIO 194

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THRILLS

Awards for 1975

Was this how it all began?

■ The First Annual Demis Roussos-Big-Mac-Yum-Yum-Award for Conspicuous-consumption-in-the-face-of-obesity to **Elvis Presley.**

■ The First Annual Future-of-Rock'n'Roll Award (to be held for the next five minutes) to: **Bruce Springsteen, Bob Marley, Chubby Checker, Patti Smith, Lowell George,** and **Bullmoose Jackson.**

■ The First Annual Art Garfunkel Wild-Man-of-Rock Award to **Paul Simon.**

■ The First Annual Cliff Richard Didn't-They-Do-Well-in-America Award to **Slade.**

■ The First Annual Roadrunner award to **Les McKeown.**

■ The First Annual David-Doesn't-Live-here-Anymore Award to **Mrs. Jones** of Beckenham.

■ The First Annual Ronnie Lane Award for getting-out-while-there's still time to **Bernie Leadon.**

■ The First Annual Ronnie Wood What-Me-Worry Award to **Tetsu.**

■ The First Annual Mick Farren Drunk-and-Disorderly award to **Eric Clapton.**

■ The First Annual Damon Runyon Harry-The-Horse Memorial Award to **David Bowie.**

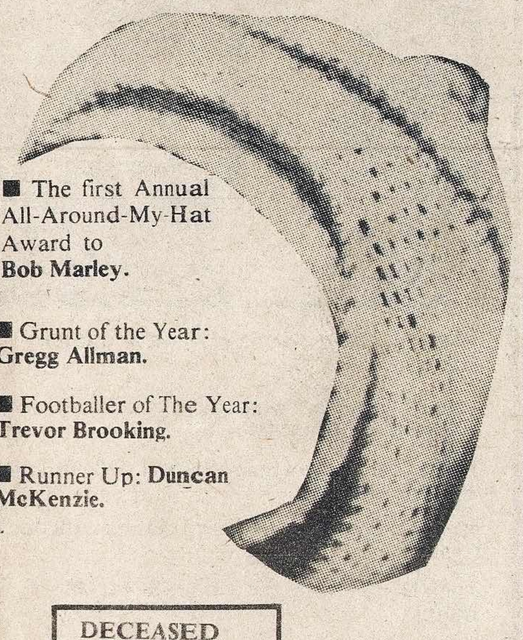
■ The First Annual Selling-Tapes-By-The-Mile-Increased-Productivity and-Contributions-to-Export-Drive-Elton-John award to **Elton John.**

■ The First Annual In-Five-Years-Time-Cat-Stevens-Will-Be-A-Hairdresser-So-What-Have-I-to-Worry-About award to **Franki Valli** (and the Four Seasons).

■ The Fourth Annual Maggie Bell Award (at one time awarded to Maggie Bell for being Maggie Bell) is currently gathering dust while we try to keep **Elkie Brooks** from nominating herself.

■ The First annual "Whither-Goest-Thou-America-In-Thy-Dark-Car-In-The-Night" Jack Kerouac Memorial Award to **Tom Waites.**

■ The First Annual Knacker-of-the Yard Award to **Krissie Wood** and **Audrey Burgon,** who also carry off the Golden Slumbers Memorial Mattress.



■ The first Annual All-Around-My-Hat Award to **Bob Marley.**

■ Grunt of the Year: **Gregg Allman.**

■ Footballer of The Year: **Trevor Brooking.**

■ Runner Up: **Duncan McKenzie.**

DECEASED

Al Jackson
Gary Thain
Mongezi Feza
Patsy Collins
Ralph J. Gleason
"Disc"

Pic: BOB GRUEN

■ The First Annual Country Joe McDonald Fighting-The-System-Award to **John Winston O'Boogie Lennon.**

■ The Second Annual Dr. Barnardo's Award to Bob Dylan and Roger McGuinn for carrying on trying to find **Mick Ronson** a decent home.

■ The First Annual H.G. Wells Invisible-Band Award to **Steely Dan.**

■ The First Annual Eric Burdon Award for Disintegration on the West Coast to **Joe Cocker.**

■ The First Annual Eldridge Cleaver-I-Fought-The-System-and-the-System-Won award to **Country Joe.**

■ The First Annual Telly Savalas-Cuddly-Cop-Psycopaths-In-The-Service-of Humanity Award to **Jack Reagan** of The Sweeney.

■ The First Annual Press Officer Award for acts of bravery above the call of duty to CBS's **Elly Smith** for sitting it out in LA with a plane load of British journalists for five days while Springsteen decided if he'd consent to any interviews.

LAST YEAR'S THINGS	NEXT YEAR'S THINGS
Woolly Hats	Blue Beat Hats
Mrs. Thatcher	Rhodes Boyson (you have been warned)
Funky Stuff	Be Bop De Luxe
Pool	Polo
International Women	Persons
The Twist	Peter Tosh
Love Bites	Shark Bites
Bryan Ferry	White Punks On Dope
Dope	Airfix Model Kits
Pub Rock	Pub Rock
Dreadlocks	Ponytails
Kojak	Sgt. Carter
Morning Cloud	Hard Times Of Old England
Limping	Milk
The Hustle	The Gay Gordons
Artistic Integrity	"Product"
Earrings	Ventilated Ear Lobes
Laurel and Hardy	Sherlock Holmes
Inflation	Unemployment

■ Sleeve of The Year: **Lee Brilleaux's** (see pic above)

■ The First Annual Petula Clark-White-Folks-Sure-Got-Rhythm-Award to **Pan's People.**

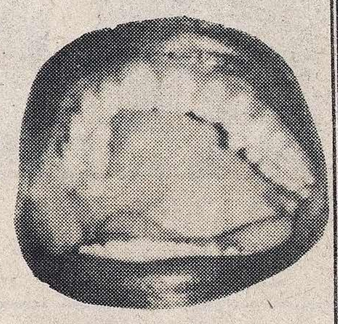
■ The First Annual This-One-Will-Run-and-Run award to **Bruce Springsteen.**

■ The Third Annual Brinsley Schwarz-Pub-Rock-Band-That-Should-Have-Made-It-But-Didn't Award to **Max Merrit and the Meteors.**

■ The first Annual Cecil B. DeMille-Nothing-Succeeds-Like-Excess Award to young **Ken Russell** of the Lower Fifth.

■ The Exchange and Mart Vocalist-Wanted Plaque shared by **Genesis** and **The Faces.**

■ The first annual "Jaws" award to **Chaka Khan.**



■ The First Annual Tax-Exile-In-The-Sun Award to **Rod Stewart, Led Zeppelin, Eric Clapton, The Rolling Stones,** and the **Average White Band.**

■ The First Annual Todd Rundgren I-Can-Overdub-Anything-Better-Than-You Award to **King Tubby.**

■ The First Annual Alex Harvey Middle-Age-Can-Be-Fun Award to **The Chieftains.**

■ The First Annual Lord Longford Award for Reformation of Character to **Greg Lake** 709864511.

■ The first Annual Faces "Ooh La La" Thanks-For-The-New-Album-But-Honestly-You-Needn't-Have-Bothered Award to **The Band** for "Northern Lights Southern Cross."

■ Bozo Of The Year: The Mayor in the US of A who had manholes in his municipality renamed Personholes to appease Women's Lib.

■ The Second Annual Marc Bolan Mighty Mouth Award to **Adrian Ben Gurvitz.**

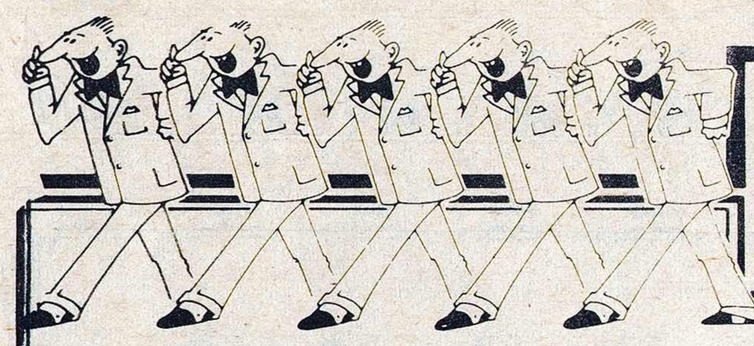
■ The first Annual Greta Garbo Award to **Mohammed Harley** for keeping his mouth shut.

■ The Groucho Marx Smart-Ass-One-Liner Memorial Cup and Saucer to be shared by Gasbag correspondent **Tony De Meur** for "Lowell George Knew My Father", and the anonymous graffiti artist who answered CBS's "Finally, London Is Ready For Bruce Springsteen" tube ads with the riposte; "If not, CBS have blown the entire year's promo budget."

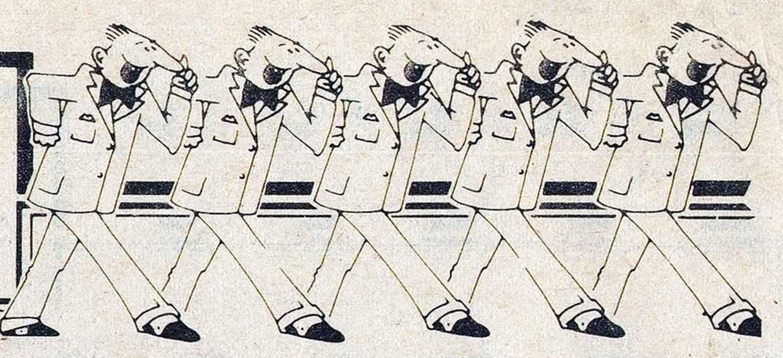
■ Romance of The Year: **Rod 'n' Britt.**

■ Wooden Spoon: **Gregg and Cher.**

GO AWAY SOON	COME BACK SOON
Radio 1	John Lennon
The Osmonds	David Bowie
The Rollers	Emmylou Harris
Malcolm Macdonald	Little Feat
Richard Ogden	The Wailers
Festival of Light	Bob Dylan
Tony Blackburn	Elvis Presley
"Top Of The Pops"	Small Faces (hint, hint)
	"Fawlty Towers"



THRILLS



THE BEST DRESSED MUSICIAN AWARDS 1975

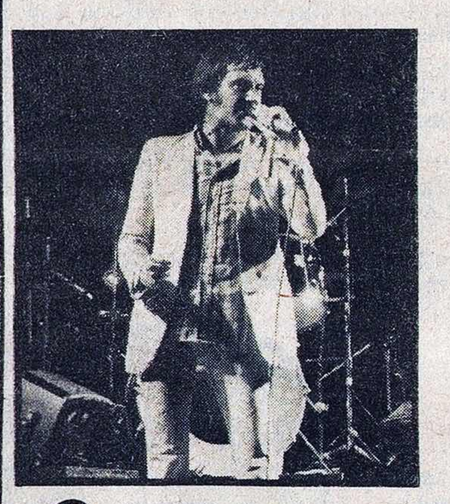
1 MICK JAGGER

2 CHRIS SPEDDING

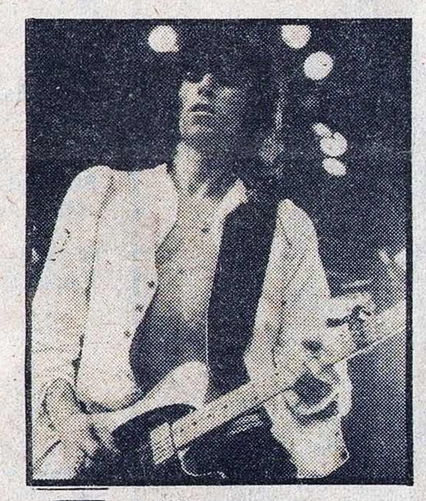
3 BOWIE

4 BETTY DAVIS

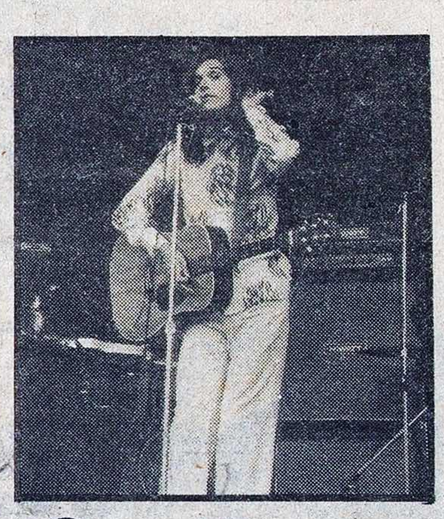
5 CHUBBY CHECKER



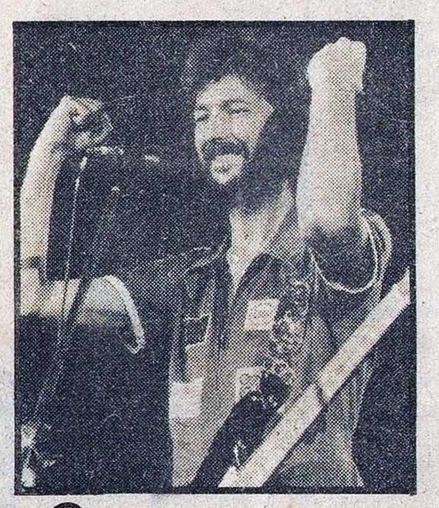
6 LEE BRILLEAUX



7 KEITH RICHARD



8 RAY DAVIES



9 ERIC CLAPTON

10 PATTI SMITH

POETRY: Lisa Robinson & the Masked Thrillsmen

THE WAY

Nona Hendryx wore a live bird on her head

John Bonham wore Clockwork Orange boilersuits and black derby hat

Ronnie Wood wore Rod Stewart's patience thin

Mick Jagger wore Lisa Robinson's knickers

Roger Daltrey wore Helen Gurley on his lap

Lee Brilleaux wore his jacket

Bryan Ferry wore a tuxedo

Freddie Mercury wore the old Zandra Rhodes white satin

John Entwistle wore a glitter jacket

Alex Harvey wore it well

The Manhattan Transfer wore nostalgia drag

Bette Midler wore the Del-Vikings "Come Go With Me" in her hair

Yoko wore pale green marabou

John wore black velvet beret and cape

Art Garfunkel wore one of those tuxedo patterned pullover sweaters

Krissie Wood and Audrey Burgon wore legal briefs

Mick Ronson wore no shirt

Tim Curry wore a corset

Mick Jagger wore a navy pea jacket

John Entwistle wore a black glitter jacket

Kiss wore makeup

Ann-Margret wore red sequins

Tina Turner wore white fur

Tam Paton wore a crooked grin

Lee Brilleaux wore his jacket

Peter Townshend wore grey gaberdine

Elton John wore the latin/macho look with a five o'clock shadow

Dolly Parton wore a gold sequin sweater with white studded jeans pantsuit

Waiters wore sailor suits

Ronnie Wood wore an Esso jumpsuit

Bette Midler wore tartans

Minnie Riperton wore rags

The Dolls wore sequins

The Bay City Rollers wore white stuff in their hair

Alice Cooper wore badly fitting tights onstage at Madison Square Gardens

Labelle wore feathers, whips and chains

Lorna Luft wore a "No Access Backstage" pass over her tits in the dressing-room

Eric Clapton wore several hangovers

Bryan Ferry wore a tweed jacket and striped tie

Lee Brilleaux wore his jacket

Television wore mostly black

Ava Cherry wore a straw hat nearly all the time

Nick Kent wore the same clothes he wore the year before

Chris Spedding wore a look of desperation

Genevieve Waite wore a strapless dress

John Philips wore a moustache and a cynical smile

Elton John wore an exposed chest and a satin jacket

Bianca Jagger wore a white walking-suit

Alice Cooper wore cutoffs backstage in San Antonio

Keith Richard wore a Confederate flag

The Duke wore jeans

Gary Glitter wore out

Bob Dylan wore a slightly soiled striped pullover

Patti Smith wore a Keith Richard t-shirt

Trevor Brooking wore an England jersey

Mick Jagger wore a black harem outfit with a piece of glass missing from his necklace

Raquel Welch wore an embroidered shawl

Bob Marley wore a woolly hat

Diana Ross wore white lace

Bianca Jagger wore the same Giorgio di Sant'Angelo dress to the party that she'd worn to the White House

Tony Tyler wore out

Eric Clapton wore an Esso jumpsuit

Bill Graham wore a maroon cherrycloth robe

Ronnie Wood wore a pie in his face

Divine wore a brown sheath

Peter Wolf wore a black, silver and purple jacket

Lee Brilleaux wore his jacket

Faye Dunaway wore a striped sweater set and a big smile

The pills wore off as the afternoon wore on

Billy Preston wore his wig

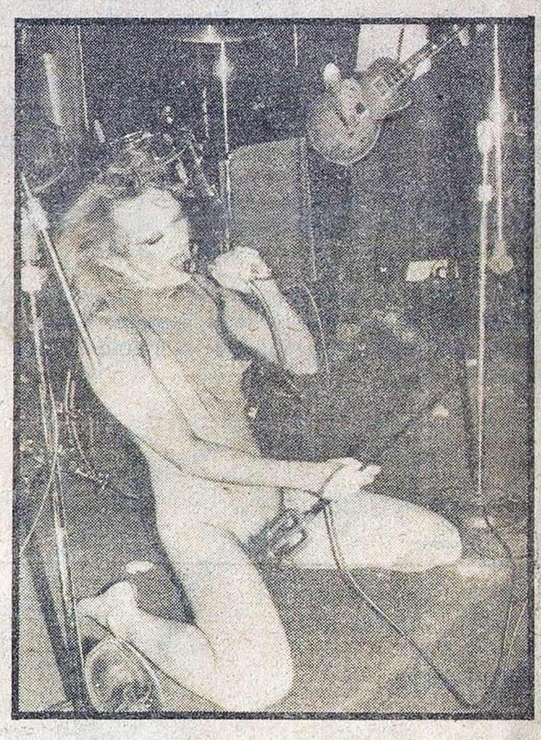
Bruce Springsteen wore a cap, lines around the block and the look of satisfaction

Diana Ross wore Big Bird yellow feathers

Bianca Jagger wore a red candystripe dress

Ronnie Wood wore Mick Jagger's borrowed red and white karate Giorgio di Sant'Angelo outfit

The Ramones wore denim and leather



Pic: BOB GRUEN

Wayne County wore a new wig and fishnet body stocking

Ronnie Van Zant wore a new black t-shirt with "Rolls Royce" on the back

Steve Clarke wore many pairs of well-elegant cowboy boots

Roger Daltry wore a "George Davis is innocent" t-shirt

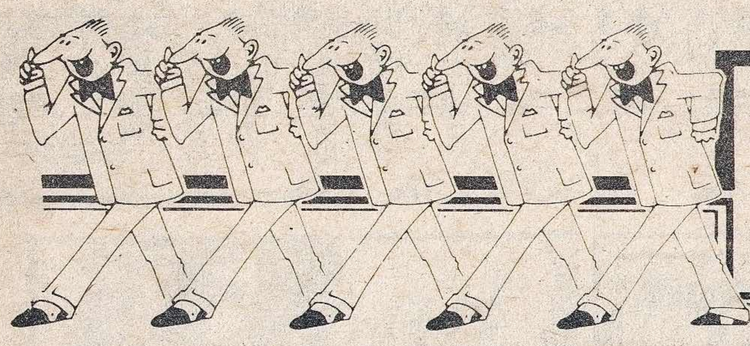
John Denver wore the Grand Canyon in his mouth

The year wore on

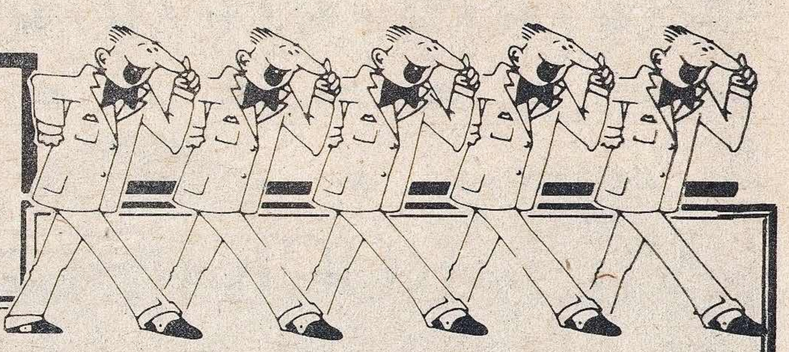
Freddie Mercury wore his teeth outside his mouth

John Cale wore maryjane t-strap shoes

Subs wore polo necks



THRILLS



THE WORST DRESSED MUSICIAN AWARDS 1975

1 KISS

2 ROLLERS

3 FLO

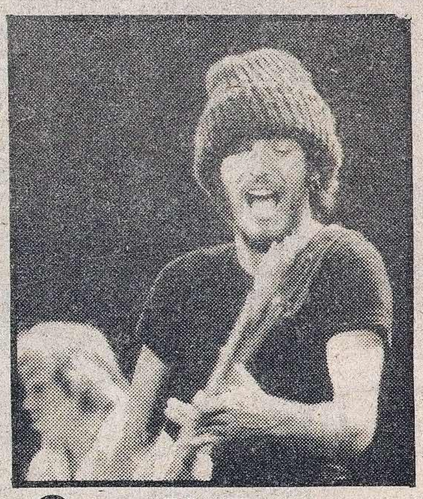
4 DISCO TEX

5 FEE WAYBILL

6 CHER

7 ELTON JOHN

8 PATTI LA BELLE



9 BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN

10 ELVIS PRESLEY

WE WORE

Eric Clapton wore clown's costume

Squeaky Fromme wore a red-hooded cape

Helen Reddy wore an undistinguished dress and nauseating smirk

Bette Midler wore jeans and frizzy hair

Scouts wore long trousers

Cher and the Pointer Sisters wore Princess Anne feathered hats and sequin shouldered gowns with a piano key motif

Patty Hearst wore dirty rubber sandals, khaki corduroys and a striped t-shirt

The Bay City Rollers wore plaid

Rod Stewart wore Britt Ekland

Patti Smith wore black

Jimmy Page wore satin jackets

Lee Brilleaux wore his jacket

Bryan Ferry wore GI khakis

Freddie Mercury wore short shorts

Ian Anderson wore a codpiece

Andy Warhol wore his welcome thin

Jim Dandy wore turquoise jewellery

Roger Daltrey wore red suspenders

Steven Tyler wore red patent leather

Keith Moon wore an Esso jumpsuit

Robert Plant wore crutches

John Entwistle wore a glitter jacket

Melanie wore a kaftan

Ronnie Wood wore knee sox and boxer shorts

Elton John wore work clothes

Eric Clapton wore a pie in his face

David Essex wore a sequinned vest

Paul Simon wore a Tommy Nutter suit

Keith Moon wore an Esso jumpsuit

Sara Dylan wore a shoulder bag

Linda McCartney wore the no-bra look and unshaved legs onstage in London

Rod Stewart wore Jagger-tied-around-the-ankle trousers

John Cale wore sunglasses and a black turtleneck

Kiss wore the usual

Bad Company wore jeans

Lee Brilleaux wore his jacket

Genevieve Waite wore Doctor Dentons

This idea wore thin

COMMENTARY: Lisa Robinson

MY FAVOURITE fashion of the year was John Cale's mask. I have a feeling that no one else will have the nerve — to say nothing of the sense of humour — to wear one again, so it probably won't catch on as The Next Big Thing. But one cannot help loving John for it.

I remember years ago when he was considering working for a large record company and his main creative idea was to sit inside an oxygen tent in his office and answer questions from executives. Was he making the same kind of statement about his audience?

Other than that it was not, as Frank would say, a very good year. I can't remember the last time someone consciously made a rock 'n roll fashion statement . . .

What? Bowie's space suits? Gary Glitter? Iggy's underwear? . . . God forbid . . . Kiss? That all seems so nostalgic now, although it was all good show business for its time.

Even if the Bay City Rollers stay the course that plaid drag can't ever be anything but a fad. (And don't tell *me* people said the same thing about Beatles and long hair; long hair was sexy . . .). At least Woody, Eric, Derek, Poopsie, whatever their names are, should *clean* those tartans. What's the use of little toy suits unless they're spotless?

Back to fashion. People have claimed for years that it doesn't exist, certainly that it has nothing to do with the *music*. Rock 'n' roll really never had anything to do with *music* either. Thank God it didn't have to.

John Denver's polyester double knit denim suits disguised as cowboy outfits . . . Helen Reddy's unpleasantly butch matte jersey sleeveless gowns . . . Ron Mael's silly little moustache . . .

This, compared to Bob Marley's wild, stoned Rasta presence . . . Patti Smith's black and white silk and pure cotton . . . Need I say more?

Mick Jagger has always known that his audience wants something more. On the 1975 tour he tried to look a like a gypsy; wore layer upon layer of clothing . . . scarves . . . bright colours. It didn't always work, but his intentions were good.

One will never know if Michael J. was on top of that fashion, whether Bianca whispered in his ear, of if his timing was just remarkably lucky. But when we tie those ribbons around the ankles, or stuff pants into boots, the 1975 Tour of the Americas comes to mind. At least until next year, when such fashion will no doubt look ridicuous.

If you'd been in New York and were at all *awake* this past year, you could not have failed to gravitate toward the spare, stark, no-nonsense look of the New York Bands. (And I'm not talking about the New York Dolls, *they* looked like the Faces).

Patti Smith, Television, The Ramones, Talking Heads . . . the short hair, the black and white look . . . the crazed, almost skeletal look of Tom Verlaine brings back memories of the great English bands in the early days. But it's no nostalgia attempt, rather an unconscious desire to strip away all superfluous Popstar Trappings.

So the look is an art, as well as the sound.

Aside from this "cultist" avant-garde hope, much of rock is so much show business. Cat Stevens has magicians on his show during the interval. Labelle wear clothes they don't feel comfortable performing in, for they know their audience demands costumes. Kiss wear makeup that no sane living person would attempt to emulate (altough 1500 students and faculty in Cadillac, Michigan recently did). Wayne County wears a Dolly Parton wig, corset and then strips down to tights and a pitchfork, and Alice Cooper (at least we're *told* it's Alice Cooper, for all we know it could be *Ashley Pandel* dressed up as Alice) is still shlepping onstage at Lake Tahoe (and in movie theaters all across the country) doing his "Welcome To My Nightmare" shtick.

There was a time, there was a generation . . .

IF YOU recall, the 1960's didn't really start until 1967, so we've got a year to go before we have to worry.

In the late 1960's California influenced "rock fashion" and gave us all those *good vibes;* I'd like to think that we'll never hear from them again. Since Paris doesn't seem to be doing it, maybe it'll be up to New York next, with its emerging sombre, chiarascuro look and artistic rock'n'roll.

THRILLS

WILL ROCK RIOTS DESTROY AMERICA

THE SINS of American rockstars have caught up with them at last. If you read Thrills two weeks ago, you'll know how they've been busy stirring up unhealthy excitement in the punters and inciting them to destroy the fabric of society annat. Well, the promoters and venue managers of America might just about have managed to put up with that. But when said riots begin to hit them in the pocket . . .

From now on they're gonna get tough, but *tough,* with degenerates who don't show for gigs, or show late, or run overtime, or insist, sassy little devils, on using their own PA systems. *Or* rouse their fans to damage Private Property. Because, report "Variety" and "Cashbox", box office is falling off rather dramatically all over the States, and managers are determined to make the most of any receipts they do collect.

In the south and southwest, several hall managers have refused to pay offending groups until overtime for stagehands and other workers has been deducted from the group's fee. And they have also refused to pay if they feel that damage to their halls was "instigated" by performers.

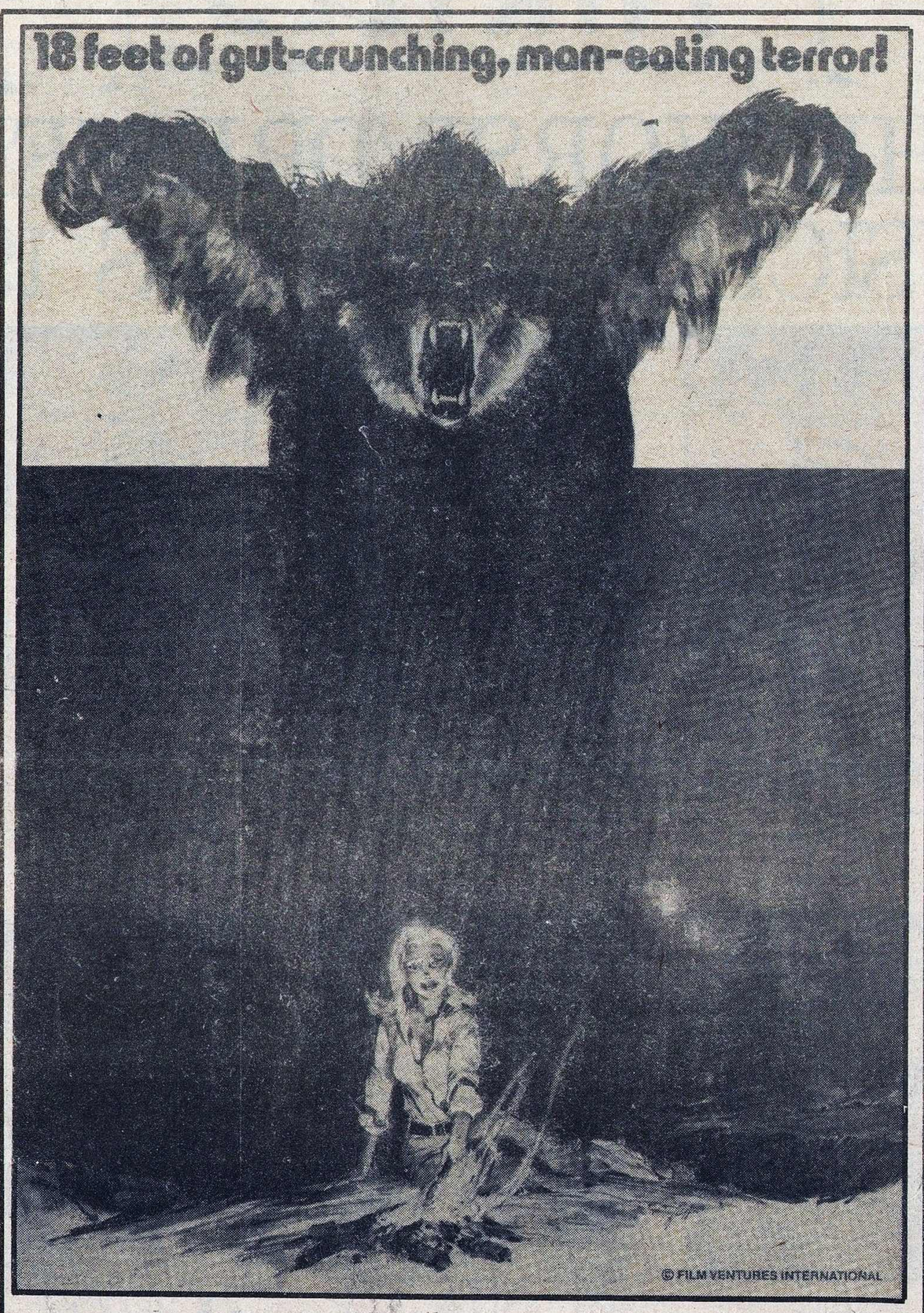
"Variety" adds darkly that, though no formal resolutions have been passed by the International Association of Auditorium Managers, there are certain groups which its members will now feel it safer to "forego". While "Cashbox", in an editorial entitled "The Price Of Violence", underlines the problem with details of beer cans thrown at Black Sabbath, firecrackers at ZZ Top gigs, and purse-snatching in Madison Square Garden: concluding that if some promoters' fears are realised, rock might die out altogether in some parts of America.

Stand by for the backlash.

☐ KATE PHILLIPS

BAD NEWS FOR PENGUIN ENTHUSIASTS

Sixty Antarctic penguins died in San Diego recently when fire broke out in refrigerated vans in which they were being held in quarantine.



If you go down in the woods...

It's bandwagon jumping time again! In an effort to snap-up some of the lucrative blood money created by the tremendous success of "Jaws", a delightful little celluloid plaything called "Grizzly" will be unleashed on the American public on March 31, 1976.

The merchandising machine is already being put into operation to quickly cream-off any extra loot to be pillaged from this "18 feet gut-crunching, man-eating terror!"

No folks, it's not Linda Lovelace we're going on about but a mean ole Grizzly Bear that's about to be promoted as the latest faddish Public Enemy No. 1.

And we always thought bears were friendly fellows in straw hats and bow-ties who stole picnic baskets.

Groovies go mod

THE LOCALE — Rockfield Studios, in deepest Gwent.

The cast — five mods in search of a hit album.

Their collective name — The Flamin' Groovies.

The Groovies?

But aren't they the long-haired hellraisers who caused maximum mayhem on their last visit here?

True — but times have changed, according to Greg Shaw, journalist by self-appointment to the 60's memorabilia trade, independent A.&R. man for Sire Records and avid Groovies freak.

"The band, as a whole, aren't really the assholes they had the reputation of being. They're actually very professional and very civilised. Last time the Groovies were here they had Danny Mihm, the juvenile delinquent drummer with them, now there's a new drummer in David Wright, who's much better and more disciplined."

But those clothes — aren't they right out of the old "Ready, Steady, Go" prop department?

FLAMING GROOVIES: New look

"We found a tailor who used to make clothes for the Beatles — these are the only things the band will wear from here on in. They've even got those shoes with the Spanish heels and everything."

And the music?

"Nothing like anything the band has done before — each track that we've done is total enough to bring about a millennium in rock and roll. Those records featuring Ray Loney on vocals are long gone. They were terribly produced and sounded kinda flat. The closest the band ever got was with 'Married Woman' a UA single — and that was three years ago."

Since the Groovies parted company with UA in '72 — the band claim that the record company failed to give them any real support (though UA have another version of the story) — they've been totin' around the record companies with a few Dave Edmunds produced tapes. Shaw put out on these tracks, "You Tore Me Down" backed by "Him Or Me", a new item recorded.

"Just because they wanted to get back into a studio again", on his own Bomp label. And it was Shaw who, because of his association with Sire Records — for whom he was compiling a "History Of British Rock" series — eventually talked the label into financing the latest jaunt to Rockfield to record an album tentatively titled "To Take Some Action".

Certainly the Groovies haven't wasted much time since they booked in. The tracks — which include a raving version of "St. Louis Blues" and a jug-band sounding workout on the Charlatans' "I Got Mine" — have been laid down at the rate of one and a half numbers per day. And modestly — as befitting their new ultra-polite image — the Groovies throw all the credit Dave Edmunds way.

"There's no producer in the world you can get the sound that Dave can," they enthused in their most sedate manner.

Then they passed around the orange-juice.

☐ FRED DELLAR

NOW YOU SEE IT — NOW YOU DON'T

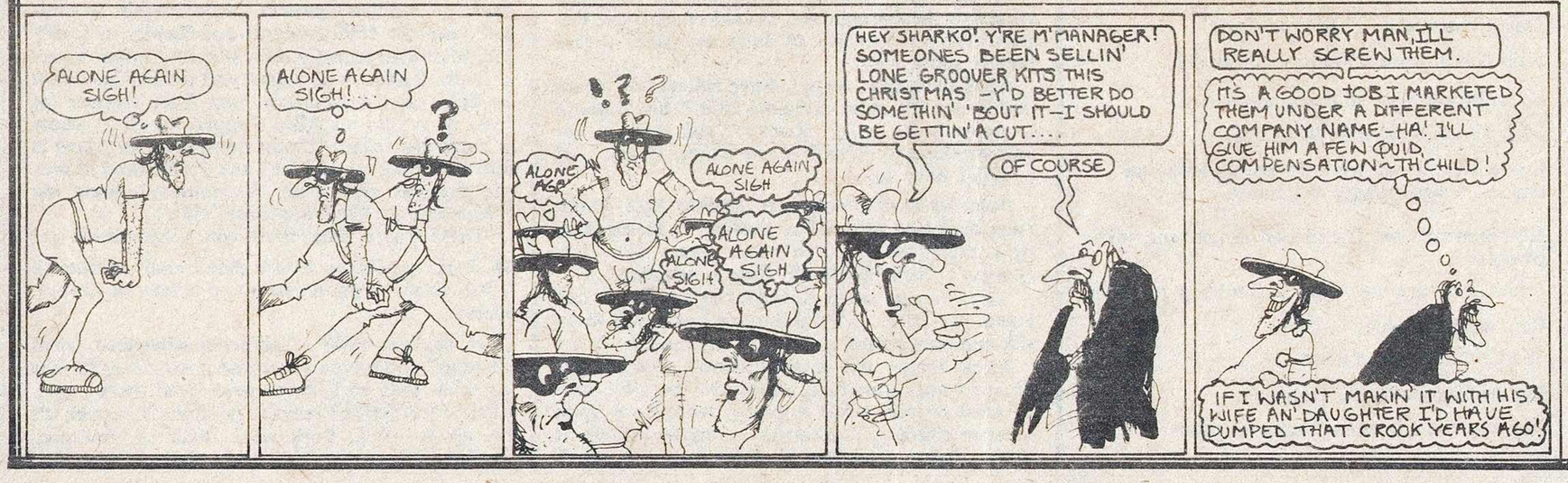
HOT TIP for the rare album of the year award is Steve Miller's "The Legend Of . . .", issued as part of Capital's Vine series just a few weeks ago, but already deleted. EMI seemed hazy as to the reason why when we rang them. "It's all something to do with Miller's contract not being renewed," they claimed. "The record should never have been issued really." Oh dear!

☐ EMMY CLANGER

At 61, Group Captain Peter Townsend talks to Peter Grosvenor

A glimpse into the future? From the Daily Express, sent by GAVIN HETHERINGTON, Girvan, Ayrshire, and LOONA of Liverpool.

LONE GROOVER — BENYON


ALONE AGAIN SIGH!
ALONE AGAIN SIGH!...
?
!?
ALONE AGAIN SIGH
ALONE AGAIN SIGH
ALONE AGAIN SIGH
ALONE AGAIN SIGH
HEY SHARKO! Y'RE M'MANAGER! SOMEONES BEEN SELLIN' LONE GROOVER KITS THIS CHRISTMAS -Y'D BETTER DO SOMETHIN' 'BOUT IT-I SHOULD BE GETTIN' A CUT....
OF COURSE
DON'T WORRY MAN, I'LL REALLY SCREW THEM.
IT'S A GOOD JOB I MARKETED THEM UNDER A DIFFERENT COMPANY NAME-HA! I'LL GIVE HIM A FEW QUID COMPENSATION-TH' CHILD!
IF I WASN'T MAKIN' IT WITH HIS WIFE AN' DAUGHTER I'D HAVE DUMPED THAT CROOK YEARS AGO!

THRILLS

NME celebrates the birth of our Lord

NEIL SPENCER celebrates his elevation to the dizzy height of Asst. Ed.

IT WAS the party of the year. That's what Joey said anyway, and he's been to all 75's most salubrious wing-dings — everything from Bruce Springsteen's coming-out ball to the barmitzvah held for Clive Davis' seventh son.

The date: December the eighteenth. The location: Dingwall's Dance Hall, Camden Lock. The celebrants: an impressive array of key rock figures and key rock liggers, all with the single-minded intent of setting the festive spirit a-rolling with the aid of an IPC bartab.

Ah, yes the NME annual Christmas party.

There wasn't one last year, see — so everyone made up for it this time round by falling about hurling Christmas cheer all over the place and generally insulting as many people as possible and all at the same time.

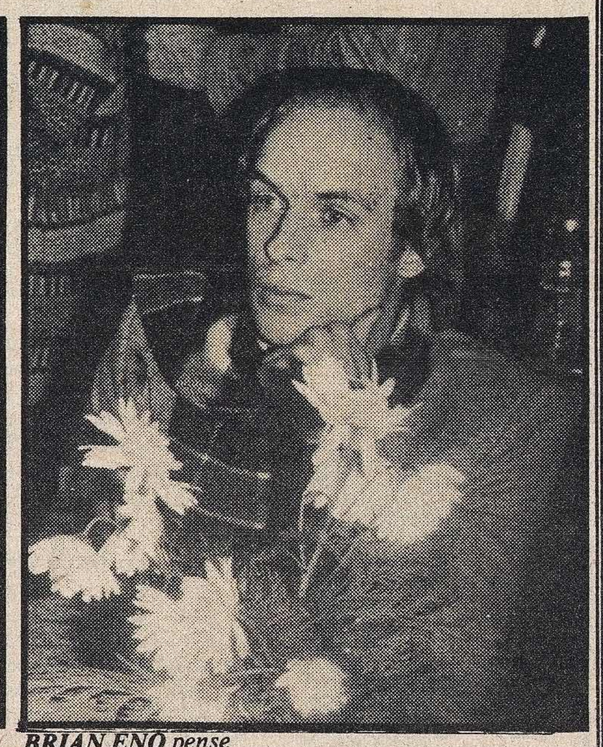
Bob Dylan's invite got lost in the post so he didn't turn up, but there was Amanda Lear hyping her latest attempts at becoming a rock star ten-to-the-dozen like some transexual Zsa Zsa Gabor assaulting anyone who seemed in any way influential with her schpiel.

Also in evidence from the bona-feed celebrity division: Canvey Island Don Juan Lee Brilleaux cut a mean figure as the only Feelgood in evidence at "the do", along with Heavy Metal Kids likely lad Gary Holton, producer Chris Thomas, current Uriah Heep bass-player the very dapper and genial John Wetton, Sonja Kristina, Slade's resident intellectual Don Powell and lorks — taking a couple of hours off from his continued struggle straining and soaring against the entire dark ages of music — the very serious Brian Eno.

Roogalator played a very hot set, no one threw up publicly and no one made a complete twerp of themselves.

NICK KENT

IAN DURY maintains a low profile and a pin in his ear



BRIAN ENO pense

SONIA KRISTINA est exploree by *CUDDLY ROY CARR*

MEN'S ROOM MEETING (l to r): KENT, ERSKINE, FARREN, photog KEITH MORRIS, pornographer JAMIE MANDELKAU and FEELGOOD chanteur LEE BRILLEAUX (in new jacket).

LOWRY

"Who's bloody silly idea was this — a Nuremburg rally on ice."

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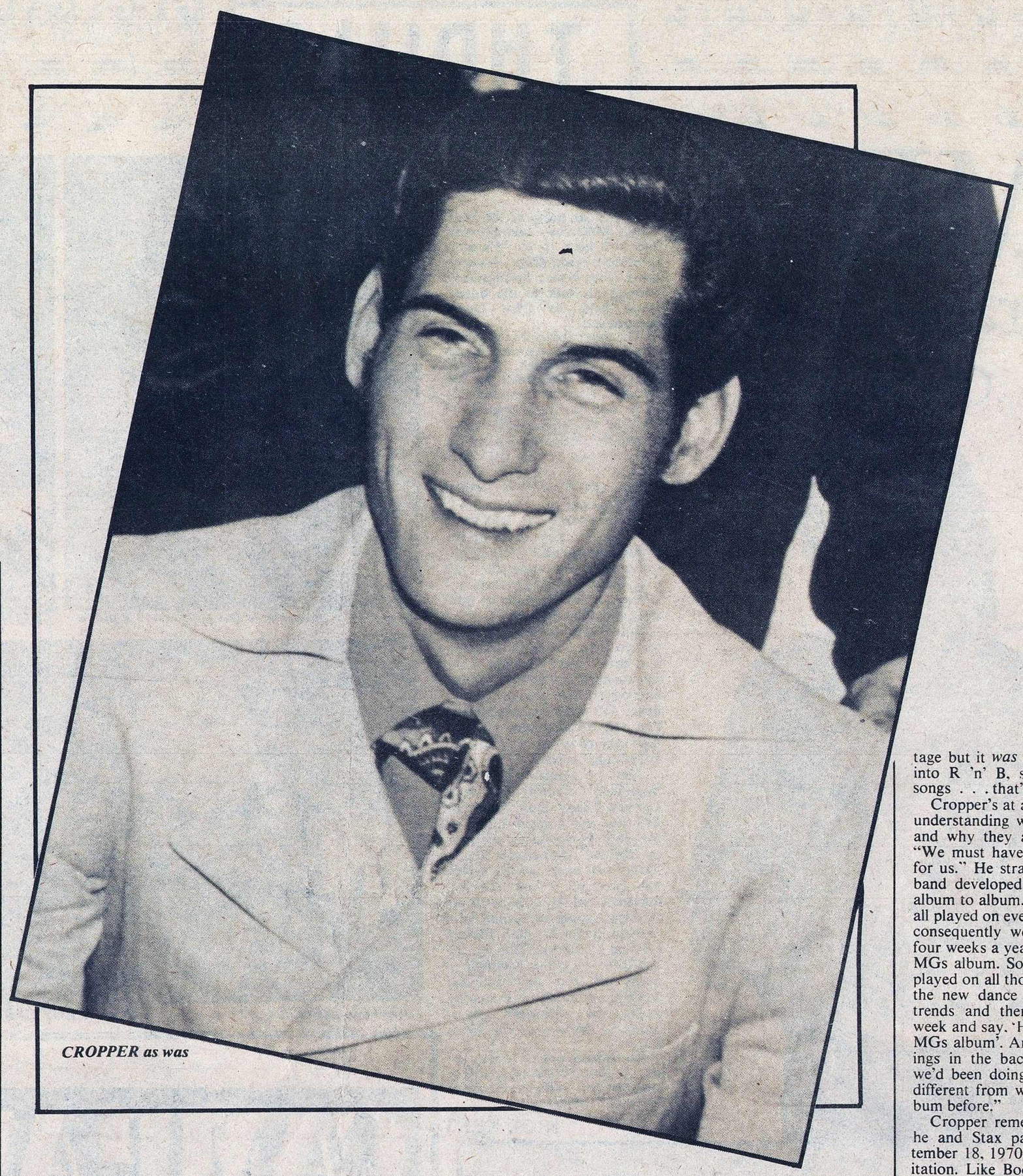

CROPPER as was

I was a mean mutha from Memphis...

IT'S A WIDELY held belief among the cognoscenti that Steve Cropper is the most under-rated guitarist of the last ten years. And yet to attain any degree of statistical objectivity about Cropper's overall contribution to rock — and R 'n' B — is well-nigh impossible. The man himself has only released one solo album, and that died an unmourned death.

That said, Cropper estimates he's played on or produced 50 million records, sales figurewise. What's more, over 600 Cropper songs have been published, many of them recorded by the major artists Of Our Time.

Impressed? I was — until I cruised over to Cropper's Los Angeles recording studio — a seedy building at the mugger's end of Santa Monica Boulevard. And Cropper's own entrance wasn't exactly greeted by trumpet flourishes.

In other words I didn't recognise him.

TO TELL THE truth: Cropper's 1975 appearance bears little resemblance to photographs of him taken around the time of the late Sixties Stax boom, when he looked just like another Southern good old boy — clean shaven, hair slicked back behind totally exposed ears, definitely not the kind of guy to be found working with black musicians.

Since then Cropper has undergone a definite upgrading. Now he wears his hair long. And his turquoise jewellery and magnificently loud shirt makes one think that here's a fella involved with making music. Now in his mid-30s, Steve Cropper's in good nick. His only vice? Smoking. He gave up drinking some months back and, save for the odd glass of wine, lives an alcohol free life. But he does say that a lot of the classic songs he wrote with Otis Redding and Wilson Pickett in the late Sixties were written on an all-night diet of rum. Moreover he's no doper — tried it all, mind you. However he reckons the best thing he's ever given up is coffee which he stopped drinking three months back.

So where do you start with Steve Cropper, a musician whose career was for a time inexorably linked with so much of the very best in black music, as musician, writer, producer — and especially as guitarist, with Booker T and The MGs, the Mar-keys and other Memphis spin-offs.

Booker T and The MGs were all about rhythm and blues, each musician a stylist in his own right. Their importance in shaping rock music over the years is clearly evident and will continue to be so. Each one of the band approached his particular instrument with a pure, economical and precise style, high on funk. As a band they were as tight as it can get.

They were to re-form at the beginning of this coming year, but Al Jackson, arguably the world's most imitated drummer, was murdered early this autumn and for the second time in his life Cropper had lost a musician he'd been close to. "What can I say?" says the guitarist who was one of Otis Redding's closest friends.

"I think the reason I don't feel Al's gone yet is because I hadn't been around him in the last few years, as close as I was to him in my own mind and heart. We just haven't spent a lot of togetherness recently."

Cropper and Jackson had worked together on two albums this year, however, Leon Russell's "Will O' The Wisp" — which marked a return to Russell's former triumphs — and Rod Stewart's "Atlantic Crossing", an album on which Cropper and Stewart worked closely, even collaborating on one tune together, side one's closing rock 'n' roll knock-about, "Stone Cold Sober Again". More later about the Cropper-Stewart liaison.

Ironically, Jackson's shooting came two weeks after the four MGs had met for the first time in four and a half years. Jackson, Cropper and their bassist "Duck" Dunn had worked together as a session trio on and off since Cropper quit Stax in 1970, but the three of them hadn't worked with Booker T. Jones since 1970. He was the first of the group to leave Stax who had employed the MGs as its house-band throughout the Sixties where they backed what reads like a Who's Who of Soul; Otis, Wilson Pickett, Carla and Rufus Thomas, William Bell, Sam and Dave *et al.* Apart from serving as the company's house-band, the four of them also had their hands in writing and producing. Cropper most of all, as well as recording in excess of a dozen group albums.

"Green Onions", their first release (in 1962) was a million seller and even made an entry into the British charts, then dominated by limp white balladeers, far removed from the uncompromising R 'n' B of Booker T and The MGs. "Onions" itself was a taut instrumental, Booker T's inimitable organ laying down the clean and broody riff behind the peerless rhythm section of Cropper, Dunn and Jackson. Although not the kind of guitarist capable of letting loose on a lead break for more than a minute, Cropper's leads are often charged with a kind of whiplash intensity and his break on "Green Onions" is a showcase for this side of him.

"The biggest things were the oldest things, what we all did as a group, because they made history," recalls Cropper. Born in Missouri, Cropper first got involved with Stax by selling records in their Memphis store which, like their music, served the city's black community. The studios themselves were situated in the black neighbourhood too. It didn't matter that, like Dunn, Cropper was white.

"Nobody said anything. There was no prejudice. No black guy ever came up and said, 'What's this white guy doing here?' It never happened and we read about all these things in the news how the south treats the black people. I never saw this.

"I knew it went on because there were black people that were maids. They were shoe shine boys, they were janitors, but they seemed fairly happy at the time. Nobody was complaining or throwing rocks.

"The MGs as a whole — we used to travel on the road — had very few incidents go down. There were a couple, especially in the Deep South, the Louisiana area, and in Virginia, stuff like that. Never from the musical stand-point, just travelling. You'd get a few stares when you pulled into a filling station cause there were two and two. Sometimes we'd get on an airplane, like on Southern Airways, and we'd get stares when we were sitting together, when we walked on as a team.

"They used to think we were a basketball team. Checking into motels you'd get stared at too. But once we got on stage it didn't matter. It didn't matter if we were playing to a white audience or a black audience. And the funny thing, when we got started, Duck and I in the Mar-Keys, we went on the road and all we played were black clubs."

Cropper had been weaned listening to black spiritual radio, shunning the Bobby Vees and Del Shannons who were popular at the time. He says he learnt to play guitar just like everybody else did in the second half of the Fifties. "In the days when I came up, everybody came up the same way. The first tune you learned was 'Honky Tonk'. If you could get through that you had a pretty good idea of what chord changes were all about. You found out what E, A and B were all about. And then it went on from there . . .

"As a group we did as many Ray Charles numbers as possible. We did whatever Ike and Tina Turner tunes were happening at the time. We did a few Chuck Berry things: but Chuck Berry was more rock 'n' roll. I don't want to take anything from his heritage but it *was* rock 'n' roll. We were into R 'n' B, strictly black R 'n' B songs . . . that's what we loved."

Cropper's at a loss when it comes to understanding why The MGs made it and why they are so highly revered. "We must have had something going for us." He strays off to say why the band developed the way it did, from album to album. "We all produced, we all played on everybody else's sessions, consequently we only spent three or four weeks a year at the most doing an MGs album. So between albums we'd played on all those records doing all of the new dance beats, all of the new trends and then we'd sit down one week and say, 'Hey, let's make another MGs album'. And we had all these things in the back of our head which we'd been doing all year long, totally different from what we'd done the album before."

Cropper remembers the exact date he and Stax parted company. "September 18, 1970," he says without hesitation. Like Booker T before him, he left the company (who soon after went into a period of decline from which it is still to emerge) because he considered Stax were getting too much out of him for too little.

"I wasn't happy with the way some of the things were going on, the way some of the musicians were being treated. There were some times when I thought the musicians deserved more than they were getting. There were some promises made that didn't come true. You know, 'Help us do this and we'll do this for you'. And a lot of things didn't go down.

"People from all over the world were calling us to work for them and Stax said a flat No. 'We're not leasing our studio. None of our musicians, our producers or song-writers are going to work for anybody else on any label for for any amount of money'. That was a disheartening thing for us. I'm not putting down Al, Bill or Jim Stewart" (the Stax hierarchy) "cause I loved them. I still respect Jim Stewart, we just had our differences."

One of the incidents which finally decided Cropper to give Stax the elbow involved Paul Simon's biggest-ever-selling song "Bridge Over Troubled Water". Simon, surprisingly enough (and perhaps this is an indication of just how much respect musicians from all genres have for Booker T and The MGs) sent the song to the band for them to record. Jim Stewart said yes, my band will record it, but you'll have to pay us a lot of money. Not surprisingly Simon turned the offer down and subsequently went on to record it with Garfunkel.

Cropper obviously regrets his employer's action, "That was a history song and we could have been there and have been part of it." He also has complaints about the way Stax promoted the band who, despite Cropper's feelings that Booker T and The MGs could have been bigger than they were, managed to notch up a string of hit singles.

"I think we were quelled a bit to make us stay in the studio. I don't really have a bitter taste in my mouth but I feel we could have been bigger than we were."

BOOKER T. JONES himself was the

CROPPER as is

...Until I discovered Otis Redding

The effect was shattering

*Well, one way or another, **STEVE CROPPER** promptly turned himself into an R 'n' B guitar legend via his work with Booker T and the MGs, The Mar-keys et al during the golden age of Stax. **STEVE CLARKE** met him in L.A. recently.*

first of the band to leave Stax. Cropper stresses the fact that the band would have liked to have kept themselves together but business reasons made it nonviable."We all loved each other. We just felt we got shafted a little bit. It happened to everybody. Creedence Clearwater went through the same thing. Even The Beatles got shafted. There's still lawsuits out there."

Cropper, as has already been stated, left Stax shortly after, but Jackson and Dunn were still working for the company this summer prior to the meeting the four had together, where they too came round to their ex-colleagues' way of thinking. "I never did think it was the right thing for Al and Duck to hang on in there but they did it anyway."

Despite Jackson's untimely death Cropper thinks a Booker T and The MGs reunion is still on the cards, with a different drummer or even several drummers. But in Cropper's eyes there's no-one who can match Al Jackson, a point of view many others would go along with. "In my mind," he says, "he's probably the best in the world. What he did, the way he did it, nobody could top. There's a lot of flashier people, but to do what he did for a record there was nobody else.

"And he proved that successfully with everybody he worked with. He wasn't just into his own thing. He did some tracks for Aretha, he did some stuff with . . . well, the things he did. He started the Al Green thing. Al came up with that tom-tom thing. He wrote about four of those tunes . . ."

SITTIN' IN the morning sun/ I'll be sittin' when the evening comes Watchin' the ships roll in and I'll watch them roll away again

Steve Cropper wrote the above lyrics for Otis Redding and about Otis Redding. As things turned out the song they'd taken from "Sittin' 'on The Dock Of The Bay", was to be the singer's epitaph as well as his biggest hit.

Cropper had worked closely with Otis since the singer's first day at Stax's Memphis studio when the former oil-driller was sitting in a corner just waiting for a chance to sing. Cropper and the band were recording a left-handed guitarist called Johnny Jenkins. Otis had driven Jenkins to the studio and Cropper had no idea who the stranger was, "We were in the control room all the time. We were doing a break so Al was sitting and talking to Otis not knowing that this was going to be The Otis Redding", is how Cropper remembers it.

"And Otis said to Al, 'I sure wish I had a chance to sing.' We finished recording Johnny — it was an instrumental called 'Soul Twist' — and Al came up and grabbed Jim (Stewart) and asked if we could give this guy a chance. We cut 'These Arms Of Mine'. Otis had been doing it onstage and Jimmy knew the song so he played guitar. I think Booker had to leave . . . We had organ and keyboard that day and one of the guys had to leave. But I wound up playing the little triplet piano on 'These Arms Of Mine'."

The record was the first of 17 consecutive Otis Redding hit records. Cropper himself was involved with Redding's music as musician, co-producer and writer. By virtue of Stax's production set-up, where just about everybody had a hand in producing, it's difficult to assess Cropper's actual hand in the production pie, but according to Cropper individual recognition came when the more dedicated members of the Stax staff spent their nights holed up in hotel rooms, a bottle of rum nearby, working closely with an artist on a song. Cropper spent many such nights with Otis.

"When Otis came in, man, we never slept. We didn't even *care* about sleeping. We'd be up two or three days at a time. We'd get to the studio about 12 o'clock. We'd get playing at least by one and we would cut until about six or seven in the evening, go eat, check into a hotel room and write all night long. We'd snatch a couple of hours sleep from eight till ten. I'd take a shower and head back to the studio. We'd do that all week long.

"Otis just meant a lot of things to a lot of people. Everybody looked forward for Otis to come in the studio. I mean, that was it. There was a big love between Otis and the band. Everybody knew he had his own band on the road but nobody thought about that. Otis was coming to town and this was it, man. Everybody would just give him all the best. They did anyway, every artist, but there seemed to be a bigger spark about Otis coming in. It was all feeling music, emotional. You didn't have to worry about playing a blues lick cause it wouldn't fit, you just played what you felt."

Throughout the entire Otis Redding catalogue Cropper is strongly in evidence as rhythm player, his chords wafer thin and serving to tighten up the rhythm section even more, his softer, more lyrical phrases emphasising the best male vocals in black music (witness Cropper's playing on "Dock Of The Bay") and sometimes stepping upfront to take a solo as on Otis's reading of "Rock Me Baby" (from the classic "Otis Blue" album).

There his playing is penetrating by dint of the fine tone he uses. In other words I reckon it's a great solo. Cropper disagrees. "It's terrible," he guffaws. "I heard it the other night for the first time in seven years. At the time I thought I was playing my best licks but I look at it now . . . Jesus Christ, it's out of tune! I must admit the feel's good but my mind wouldn't even let me think like that now. There'd be more of it."

Because of Redding's limited knowledge of guitar technique, Cropper modified the way he played for Otis's records, always using an open E tuning. "Otis couldn't finger anything so, in reality, he taught me how to play guitar," says Cropper. "You know 'Sweet Soul Music' (the Arthur Conley song. Conley was in fact managed by Redding). Otis is playing guitar on that. He cut it down in Macon I guess, or Muscle Shoals. And you can hear him playing that old rock 'n' roll.

"When Otis was working on a lyric he'd hand me the guitar and I'd play the song. Consequently all of Otis's songs that we wrote didn't have any minor keys in them. Later on I started to add a few but in the early days all those songs were done in major keys. That's where all those weird horn sounds come from, cause he just played the bar chord all the way. I started playing that way on sessions cause I'd dug the sound we'd been doing all night long. Next day I just tuned to a chord and played the song the same way.

"I seldom use it anymore . . . every now and then if the music's just right. There's a tune we just did with Leon Russell that's played a lot out here called 'Lady Blue'. I tuned that way for that er, tune."

With classic soul songs like "Respect" and "I Can't Turn You Loose" to his credit, Otis Redding was often an inspired songwriter as well as being a great singer. According to Cropper he'd rarely be short of ideas and when the two wrote a song together there'd be a mutual exchange of ideas.

"Every time he came in off the road he'd have about 12 starts of things. Otis always had a potful of ideas. A lot of the lyrics I wrote were about Otis. He didn't think that way and I wrote about him, as though I'm on the outside looking at Otis and what I thought Otis was. And when it turned round he was singing about himself, like 'Mr. Pitiful'.

"The 'Dock Of The Bay' lyrics were all about him, about him going to San Francisco. We stayed on a boat house at Sausalito. He came in with the idea, you know. 'I left my home in Georgia'. The whole bit was about Otis."

Surely he realised?

"I don't know. I never asked him. I just felt that's what he ought to be singing cause he was Otis. He was the king."

So how come the song "Mr. Pitiful".

"Cause his lyrics were pitiful. I'll tell you where that got started. I didn't come up with that, somebody else did. There was a disc jockey in Memphis who started calling Otis 'Mr. Pitiful' because he sounded so pitiful when he sang ballads, made chicks cry and all that. And I just wrote a song about that.

"Believe it or not we wrote that in a car, driving from a hotel room to a studio. When we walked into the studio 15 minutes later we just about had it finished. I was humming the melody in my head so I knew the set of changes. All it was was three verses and a little turn-around thing. And we had two and a half verses going. Otis was trying to learn them in the car.

"By the time we started recording he'd forgotten the last verse and he

Continued on page 24

PLATTERS

RINGO STARR: Blast From Your Past (Apple)

THE REASONS why Ringo has chosen this moment to release a Greatest Hits album are perhaps two-fold:

a) Because John's just done a similar thing, and Ringo always was influenced by him, and b) because it was just in time to catch the Christmas market — though whether or not December 19th (the actual date of release — there were delays at the EMI factory) is in time to catch the Christmas market is open to question.

Nevertheless, the mere fact that Ringo has been the second of the four ex-Beatles to have issued a Greatest Hits album of solo material would have raised a few eyebrows back in early '70.

And Greatest Hits album it really is, if only because all the songs here represent Ringo's singles output in the States (excepting the last one, "Goodnight Vienna," a disappointing omission); and all have been hits, several of them Top 10, at least three No 1's.

It consists of the two early singles — "It Don't Come Easy" and "Back Off Boogaloo," plus the b-side of the former, "Early 1970," a period curiosity, interesting at the time, but of little substance here.

There's the title-track from "Beaucoups Of Blues," and two from "Goodnight Vienna" — the very fine "No No Song," which Ringo declined to issue here in the face of certain radio boycotting, and the positively dreadful "Only You"; the idea was jokey and promising — Ringo's deadpan baritone as an unlikely substitute for Tony Williams' dazzling falsetto, but it was almost inevitably a failure.

That leaves four tracks from "Ringo," the first Ringo-Richard Perry co-operative effort, and one of which Ringo can be justifiably proud.

"I'm The Greatest" is the one Lennon wrote for him (and like "With A Little Help From My Friends," it is a perfect vehicle for Ringo), "Photograph" is the one he wrote for himself, with due assistance from George, "You're Sixteen" is the imaginative and successful treatment of the Johnny Burnette song, and "Oh My My," another self-composition which, despite its not-too-promising title, boogies along efficiently and here works like Lucozade after the lugubrious "Beaucoups Of Blues."

As an American release, this is perfectly adequate; as a British release, I have my doubts.

Since Ringo didn't consider much of this material suitable for British singles release, why should he now consider an album of American 45s a going proposition in Britain?

After all, only four of these have penetrated the British charts. Each side clocks in at a minimal 14 minutes — one extra number per side would hardly have been a flagrant case of over-generosity; and there were enough to choose from. Similarly, the sleeve art-work appears hastily conceived and shoddy.

Though this can claim to be a valid Blast From Your Past, it finally is track-for-track quite inferior to "Ringo," which is the Ringo album I'd still suggest you all purchase.

It's disappointing to realise how product-conscious The Beatles have become since the split. Ringo should have completely re-thought this album for British release; there is a fine Best-Of-Ringo album to be compiled, but this isn't it. The proof will be in the sales, because if Ringo thinks this album is going to be successful over here, that's just a figment of his imagination.

"But I haven't got an imagination."

Bob Woffinden

Richard Starkey, M.B.E. — film star, director, furniture-designer, land-based astronaut and occasional recorder of occasional hit records

I was in the greatest show on earth, for what it was worth

Now I'm only 32
And all I want to do is boogaloo

VAN DYKE PARKS: Clang Of The Yankee Reaper (Warner Bros.)

VAN DYKE PARKS is one of those people who are usually regarded as either genius or idiot.

Objective criticism becomes difficult when cult-groups scrabble to lob loaded metaphors at one another concerning their refulgent hero. However, we can try.

Parks first came to public notice for spending $37,500 on his "Song Cycle" album. Even though Warners were giving it away for a penny at one point, the album in fact went black in four years.

Van Dyke is used to Hollywood spending. He was contracted to MGM pictures in 1955 and made $1,050 a week plus limo service as a child star. He lived at the Chateau Marmont and was in "The Swan" with Grace Kelly. I'm telling you all this because it is this life that his music is about.

His second album is called "Discover America", an ironic title considering it is mostly about the Caribbean and most of the people there have only just managed to get free of Britain without needing "Caribe" down their necks.

The album had songs about what Californians call history, that is to say, about FDR, J. Edgar Hoover and Bing Crosby.

Most tracks had a Trinidad Steel band backing. Parks produced albums by The Esso Trinidad Steel Band, The Trinidad

IMPORTS

1975 checklist — Beatles still best-sellers

1975 WAS a busy year importwise.

Selecta and CRD, two of our major wholesalers, did well enough to move to larger premises; EMI Imports began EMI International and really knuckled down to the task of getting local dealers to accept imports as part of their normal stock-in-trade; Arnison International did a deal that put thousands of cheap American albums into various branches of Woolworth's; Charmdale nearly made us all bankrupt by bringing in all those high-priced, but beautifully packaged Jap "live" sets; while Quinn's tried to relieve our financial burden with huge shipments of £1.10 priced U.S. cut-outs.

But what were the year's biggest sellers?

Well, obviously items like **Bob Dylan's** "Blood On The Tracks" and **The Band's** "Northern Lights, Southern Cross" sold by the lorry-load during the short period they were import only.

But when it came to compiling my New Year's Honours List I decided not to include any discs that had either been granted a British release during the past year or were likely to appear on the home scene during the opening weeks of 1976 — thus ruling out albums like **Quicksilver Messenger Service's** "Solid Silver" or **Andrew Gold's** first solo effort.

Working on this premise, I checked out the sales figures at HMV's massive Oxford Street store, Virgin's new Marble Arch bazaar and at Vixens (the wholesalers who supply Harlequin and other large chains) and eventually came up with the following list of best-sellers:

(i) **Beatles** "Magical Mystery Tour" (Capitol); (ii) **Rolling Stones** "Hot Rocks" (London); (iii) **Elton John** "Pop Chronik" (DJM) and "17-11-70" (Uni); (v) **Free** "The Free Story" (Canadian Island); (vi) **Various Artists** "The Motown Story" (Motown); (vii) **Otis Redding/Jimi Hendrix** "At Monterey (Reprise); (viii) **Gram Parsons** "G.P." (Reprise); (ix) **Tangerine Dream** "Zeit" (chr); and (x) **Mike Nesmith** "The Prison" (Pacific Arts).

Vixen's Adrian Figges says "Others that have sold well for us include **Jerry Garcia's** "Old And In The Way", **Robert Hunter's** "Tiger Rose" and the **Lesh-Lagin** "Seastones", all on the Dead's own Round label; **Stanley Turrentine's** "In The Pocket" (Fantasy), the fastest mover among the sax-man's four 1975 releases, none of which have been released in this country; **Loleatta Holloway's** "Cry To Me" (Aware), by a soul lady in the Millie Jackson mould who continues to sell with no sign of a U.K. release; Vols. 1 & 2 of "The Immediate Story" on Sire; **Mahogany Rush's** "Strange Universe" (20th Century), the third album from the Canadian rock outfit; "Society's Child" (Polydor) and "Present Company" (Capitol) both by **Janis Ian** and reissued because of the success of the two CBS albums; and "King Harvest" (A.&M.) an excellent elpee from the band that gave birth to **Orleans.**

Chris Damico of Virgin agrees that the Round issues, which his shop has been selling for £1.89, have logged heavy sales, likewise anything by **Grin, Mahogany Rush, Tim Buckley** and **The Youngbloods.**

Hall and Oates' first album (Atlantic), the **Merl Saunders/Jerry Garcia** "Live At Keystone" (Fantasy), **George Benson's** "White Rabbit" (A CTI item issued here a couple of years back but quickly deleted), and **Taj Mahal's** "Giant Stop" (CBS), are others that have figured among Marble Arch's fastest movers.

Janis Ian, pictured at the Bottom Line recently. Pic: DAGMAR

Meanwhile, further down Oxford Street, on HMV's first floor, the **Buddy Holly** boxed set has found plenty of takers — even at £16 a time — other sellers here being **"Clapton, Beck And Page"** (on Euro-EMI and U.S. RCA); **"64 Motown Hits"**, a 4 LP set that retails at moderate price; the German released **"Temptations** — Live in Japan"; the European version of **Dylan's** "Greatest Hits Vol. 2" (CBS); "The Best of **Nina Simone"** (Philips); **"Sedaka's** Back" (Rocket); **The Burrito's** "Gilded Palace Of The Earth" and "Myths Of King Arthur", plus **The Carpenters'** "Now And Then" (all A.&M.).

So much for the import hits of 1975 — but what's going to score in '76?

Undoubtedly one contender for the title will be a four-album boxed set titled "Superstars Of The 70s" (WEA), one of the best samplers I've yet seen. You'll have to wait till next week to learn further details.

Happy new year.

Fred Dellar

PLATTERS

Tripoli Steel Band, The Andre de la Battiste Steel Band and the Mighty Sparrow.

"I was aware of Calypso herself, and that became an all-consuming interest for me about a decade ago, since 1961, when I worked with a steel band to support myself in Beachtown. Now I'm having to separate from that interest and express something more American."

This he has done to a certain extent. He no longer sings all the songs in a West Indian accent and only half the tracks are latin numbers using Trinidad steel pans. Much more of his Californian music background comes through.

He wrote songs with Brian Wilson for the Beach Boys and worked as producer with Lowell George and Ry Cooder, to name but a few of his achievements.

"Clang Of The Yankee Reaper" is the only number on the album he had a hand in writing. Like everything else it is real Los Angeles music. They can't resist the big orchestra and strings. "Yankee Reaper" opens like a movie soundtrack, there's even someone, maybe Parks, whistling on the intro. The subject is one dear to Parks: how the US took over Britain's traditional markets. Sounds a bit like The Kinks "Arthur".

The theme of American waste and dominance continues. His enormous experience working for Warners enables him to locate other people's songs which say just what he wants to say. Thus "City On The Hill" is about slums and "Past That Stage" is ecological. He left it till the third track before the steel pans came in. Pretty good. He thought he'd hidden them in the orchestra but they're there.

By "Another Dream" the pans come right out in the open and he just gives in. It is a great uptempo latin number.

He keeps the pace up on "Love Is The Answer" which would make a great single, assuming people would buy latin singles by Van Dyke Parks.

Real Hollywood nostalgia on "Tribute To Spree", the man who invented the steel band. This track could have been arranged in the forties. Great stuff. The latin beat remains on an outrageous version of "Soul Train".

He ends the album with Johann Pachelbel's "Canon in D" which he spells "Cannon" presumably as an obscure Parks joke. Anyway, this track is itself worth the price of the album.

Brian Eno permutates this same piece on his "Discreet" album but there's no comparison. Full orchestra and steel pans give true Renaissance splendour to this 275-year-old classic. The Canon is so perfectly balanced that you can do anything to it. Although ELP haven't had a bash yet, it's perfect material for them.

This track haunts me. The only thing is, what does Van Dyke play on it? I can't hear a piano unless there's an electric one deep in the mix, there's no vocals and it was arranged by someone else.

No matter.

I'd sum this album up by quoting Parks' own words, which are the usual strangely pompous speech forms common to highly intelligent but poorly educated Americans: "I prefer record productions that are more abstracted, that are still suggestive of possibilities for dance orientation . . ."

In other words you can dance to it. **Miles**

THE BLACKBYRDS: City Life (Fanstasy)

THE MIXTURE more or less as before.

Perhaps a dash more black pepper than "Flying Start", but still served over easy, not too greasy. These university graduates from Dr. Donald Byrd's department of applied music try so hard to be academically worthy of their mentor they overlook the essence of good home cooking — that it's not what you do, it's the way that you do it.

As a result, their records are technically superb and about as exciting as boiled potatoes.

Fantasy are proud to tell us, "The Blackbyrds have perfected a blend of jazz, rock, and funk that cuts across all musical boundaries, appealing to all age groups and different kinds of people"; a recipe that sounds disturbingly like a black, American equivalent of every group who has ever entered the Eurovision song contest.

Actually they're not quite so middle-of-the-road as that: more middle-of-the-street music really. Like a cross between the Sly Stone/Ohio Players school of funk . . . and 5th Dimension.

Light harmonies, crisp rhythms, and a modicum of synthesised virtuosity are tidily arranged into eight inoffensive helpings, including their new single "Rock Creek Park"/"Flying High" (a natural successor to "Walking In Rhythm"), providing pleasant background music for doing household chores, entertaining friends, or writing other reviews for NME. **Cliff White**

BAY CITY ROLLERS: Wouldn't You Like It? (Bell)

NOT EVEN the most astute Japanese toy manufacturer could have devised a product as instantly marketable as the Bay City Rollers.

There's nothing wrong with toys, and therefore nothing drastically wrong with real live kewpie dolls aimed at little girls too old for teddybears but still too young to date, but little girls grow bigger everyday and quickly grow tired of last year's playthings. In actual fact, I couldn't give this album away over Christmas to three little ladies who 12 months earlier would have surrendered their complete Marc Bolan poster collection for a taste.

Though efforts are being made to give the impression that the Wee Ones are The Future of Rock 'n' Roll it must be stated that despite continual comparisons, the Rollers are not the new Beatles or, for that matter, even in the same class.

If comparisons must be hung (or drawn and quartered), then plonk the Rollers right alongside of the 1910 Fruitgum Company and the Ohio Express and leave it at that.

As this album demonstrates, all their licks and hooks have been blatantly begged, borrowed and tealeafed from almost every major bopper attraction over the last five years or more, to the extent that any real kudos must go to Musical Director Colin Frechter, Producer Phil Wainman and Sound Engineers Dave Grinstead, Mike Gardner and James Guthrie for making a dozen silk purses out of as many sows' ears.

As tracks like "Too Young To Rock & Roll" illustrate, what damns the Rollers is their inability to function with any degree of credibility as even a bubblegum rock band while at the same time attempting with equal success to further dilute America's already diluted harmonic skill and lyrical pretensions on "Shanghai's In Love" and "Eagles Fly". The rest of the album wouldn't even cut it as "Tab Hunter's Basement Tapes."

For the time being, the Bay City Rollers owe their success principally to their tailor and hairdresser. Gentlemen, stand up and take a bow. **Roy Carr**

The Blackbyrds, looking for a plane; the review's in col. 2.

Brittany and Cornwall declared sovereign states — Stivell steps to the microphone to make victory speech.

BRETONIA RULES – OK?

ALAN STIVELL: E Langonned (Fontana)

I'VE HAD a ridiculously expensive import copy of this album for at least six months, but it's turned out to have been well worth the investment.

Of the six Stivell albums released over here, it's possibly the best.

Surprisingly it's also his most traditional album — mainly Breton songs and tunes, with not an electric chord in earshot, variously sung in Breton, French and Gaelic.

The sleeve provides a gloss of most of the songs and they provide strong hints of Stivell's political and aesthetic motivations.

But it's downright disgraceful that Phonogram have released "E Langonned" without the long note to be found on the inner sleeve of the French version, as it contains easily the most coherent exposition of Stivell's political standpoint on Breton (and by implication all minorities, particularly Celtic) nationalism.

That said, the music's fine in its own right, and I hope a lot of Stivell fans, expecting another electric album, buy this because it'll instantly convert a lot of listeners to the source music.

Not that it's purely Breton. There are Irish, Scottish and Welsh tunes included as well with significant transposition from one regional style to another (which is where Stivell's inner sleeve note would have helped).

The accompaniment includes Stivell himeself on the harp, tin whistle (still oddly referred to as an "Irish flute"), Scottish bagpipes and bomabard, as well as various combinations of flute, Breton bagpipes, Scottish drums, bodhran.

The line-up includes Stivell's guitarist Dan ar Bras and fiddler Rene Werner as well as various members of the Breton pipe band, the Bagad Bleimor.

The linking of medleys of tunes at the end of side one is particualry attractive, shifting as it does from harp air, pipes, the odd drum tattoo to dance tunes which really swing — like one which uses harp, flute and bodhran.

And Stivell's singing is strong and clear, much better than the often strained voice on the last live album.

Just let the gently seductive tunes wash over you, and the chances are you'll succumb.

Bretonia rules, okay?

Rod McShane

SPUD: The Happy Handful (Philips)

THE MATERIAL on Spud's debut album, "A Silk Purse", divided into the kind of schmaltzy chart folk song which too often takes the Irish charts by storm, and the much more interesting medleys of traditional tunes.

Spud's second album is a much more adventurous effort in all respects.

True, a number of the songs aren't exactly suffering underexposure. And the treatments offered are familiar — "Twa Corbies" (heavy on the brooding menace) and the Sinn Feining "Down By The Glenside" (heavy on the political sentimentality).

Producer Simon Nicol deserves due praise for keeping the overall sound lean enough to allow some very fine instrumental toning to shine.

No complaints about the individual contributions — Don Knox proves himself a very versatile fiddler by the end of the set, Michael Smith's bass work is excellent whether it's providing a rhythmic lead-in or a comfortable bed for guitar to splash notes around.

Austin Kenny provides the two least characteristic cuts on the album — "All the Dancing Ladies", a tuneful swirling number with mercifully uncluttered string and woodwind arrangement, and "Madrigillicuddy", a four-part madrigal-cum-what-have-you for acoustic instruments (mandolin, guitars, recorder).

What does hamper Spud is the absence of a particularly strong singer — Kenny handles the lead vocals well enough for the most part, but the attempt to throw vocals around to Knox and O"Connor reveals the group's major weakness.

Still, the insturmentals have a lot to offer and virtually every one of the songs has at least one good instrumental break.

Actually, the most outstanding piece of playing on the album is the acoustic slide work from session guitarist Jimmy Faulkner — some vicious fills lift what might have been an otherwise ordinary reworking of "The Wild Rover" into what is one of the best cuts on the album. **Rod McShane**

KRAAN: Let It Out (Gull)

FOR THE last three years, Kraan have been living collectively in a farmhouse deep in the Teutoberger Forest, surrounded by trees, horses, wives, friends, roadies and their manager. Sounds idyllic doesn't it? I think I can guess what records they took with them . . . but more of that later.

When "Andy Nogger" was released in England it was a pleasant relief to find a German pop group specialising in melody instead of space music.

Now comes "Let It Out" and the liking for melody is still there. The whole album (but for one track) is interesting, lively, bright, compact and tight-knit. I do find them humourless but is that really any way to judge a good tune?

They have added keyboards to their line-up of guitar, vocal, bass, drums and alto saxophone since "Andy Nogger" and it is a very useful addition.

I hear traces of Traffic all through their work, particularly on "Luftpost" but most of all I hear Zappa . . . Zappa of the "Hot Rats", "Weasels Ripped My Flesh" and "Burnt Weeny Sandwich" period. Kraan's "Degado" track owes a lot to "Peaches En Regalia" for instance.

The most disappointing section is a track called "Die Maschine" which uses backwards tapes and echoed voices in an uninspired imitation of decade-old Lettrist experiments.

Some of the tracks here are really good. Peter Wolbrandt does a Zappaesque solo on "Prima Klima" and Johannes Pappert squeals away on sax but I can't imagine them working up a sweat somehow. It's funny.

I'm told they are so much better live. **Miles**

PLATTERS

*In which **ENO**, proud possessor of a brand-new record label, stands accused of wilful obscurity; **MILES** investigates and reviews the first four releases*

GAVIN BRYARS: The Sinking Of The Titanic;
CHRISTOPHER HOBBS, JOHN ADAMS AND GAVIN BRYARS: Ensemble Pieces;
BRIAN ENO: Discreet Music;
MAX EASTLEY AND DAVID TOOP: New And Rediscovered Musical Instruments. (Obscure Records)

The Titanic sails at dawn . . .

Someone gave Eno a record label for Christmas

EXPERIMENTAL AND avant-garde music, by its very nature, exists mainly in the fringe area of private pressings, such as the "Musica" or George Avakian productions of John Cage or else on the smaller experimental labels such as American Odyssey, Nonesuch, ESP or Turnabout or the French Shander or Actuel labels.

In Britain there is a big need for such a label and it could be that Eno is going to fill it.

Eno has said: "Obscure Records is an attempt to inject whole new areas into rock". It is interesting that he regards the label as a research and development area for the industry and its true that no other industry of comparable size exists which pursues such a hit-and-miss (literally) development plan. Rockbizz does no independent research into future sounds itself.

If this is what Eno's up to, then all power to his shining elbow.

The name disturbs me, though.

"Obscure Records" is surely a form of inverted snobbery certainly more designed to appeal to upmarket Sunday supplement reading intellectuals who want to think they're hip than to your average Rock and Roller who has his or her ears already open for interesting new sounds.

And as Rock and Rollers ears are more open, moist, receptive and much more numerous, may I suggest Eno advertise in *NME* as well as *The Sunday Times?*

The only music weekly ad I saw was in *Melody Maker* (well, CSM saw it actually), but the ad should have been in all of them.

How else are people to know about the albums since hardly any stores stock them?

There's little new or obscure on Eno's label that we haven't heard ten years ago and the name "Obscure" is likely to turn people off rather than introduce them to new areas.

Though it is filling a need among the community of experimental musicians and composers to hear each other, Obscure is doing nothing new unless it reaches the rock audience.

Zappa was able to get his Bizarre label pressings of the GTOs and Wild Man Fischer distributed to a wide market by using rockbizz machinery to the hilt.

Maybe Eno should change the name to "Accessible Records". After all, over a million copies of "TubularBells" sold in this country and that ain't exactly Gary Glitter.

The difference between "Bells" and Gavin Bryars is not quite as big as some people might think.

GAVIN BRYARS' "The Sinking of the Titanic" is a work for string ensemble, essentially based on the hymn(s) known to be played by the band as the ship went down. The piece is inspired by Marconi's suggestion that sounds, once generated, never die but just get fainter.

In principle the sound of the band playing a hymn as the water closed over them is still being transmitted through the sound-efficient medium of the Atlantic water.

Superimposed sparingly over the music is a recorded conversation with Miss Eva Hart, one of the survivors and also the sound of a music-box which was saved and entertained the children on one of the lifeboats.

I find this piece a remarkably complete and satisfying statement. All relevant details and sources of information concerning the hymn and the event are included in lengthy sleeve notes.

Side two contains "Jesus' Blood Never Failed Me Yet" which is sung by an old tramp on a looped tape. Various forms of orchestral accompaniment are used.

I highly recommend this album, the one I liked most of the four.

Before going on. Bryars makes a statement " 'pataphysics is the science" on the sleeve and makes other references to this subject. Since Paul McCartney once used this reference in a song ("Maxwell's Silver Hammer") it seems we should clear up any, er, obscurity.

The full quote is " Pataphysics is the science of imaginary solutions, which symbolically attribute the properties of objects, described by their virtuality, to their lineaments."

In other words it examines the laws which govern exceptions. It's so nice to make everything clear.

GAVIN BRYARS has a further composition on "Ensemble Pieces" called "1,2,1-2-3-4".

I once stayed in a hotel in a small French town. Across the street the local Communist Party fete was going on. Everyone fell over drunk by about 1 a.m.

Everyone except one young farmer who found to his delight that the stage microphone had been left on. He sang drunken snatches of popular songs for about an hour-and-a-half in the warm night. As he swigged on a bottle of claret his singing became more and more fragmented.

Though "1, 2, 1-2-3-4" has no lyrics as such it's feeling is very similar to this experience.

An eight-piece orchestra including Cornelius Cardew on cello plus two vocalists, one of which is Eno, play the instructions given to them on headphones from a cassette.

They cannot hear each other and their machines don't quite synchronize and it is these time differences which give the piece its dynamic interest.

I thought Cardew had stopped doing this kind of thing and was doing nothing but sing 1930's working-class songs these days. Certainly his last album was like that.

"Aran" by Christopher Hobbs is played on tubular bells, toy piano, cowbells and stuff. It marches in a pleasant note for note way in an apparantly random direction.

This is probably because the notation for the piece was determined by random means. I like it.

On side two he has a Pibroch style number. Pibroch is the most highly developed form of bagpipe music. He plays it on four reed organs simultaneously. It's like Nico without the vocals.

John Adams' "American Standard" is played by a traditional wind ensemble with percussion.

I don't see anything new or obscure about this three-part work, unless the fact that a tape recording of a TV talk show has been overdubbed over part of it is thought of as unusual.

Everyone from Cage through the Bob James Trio to the Velvet Underground has done this before. Try Elisabeth Lutyens work instead.

BRIAN ENO's own "Discreet Music" is Obscure 3.

It echoes his work with Robert Fripp on "No Pussyfooting" and is not really very good.

A very few notes played using an extended echo effect. It is supposed to be played very quietly, just above the threshold of hearing.

There was an Atlantic album about five years ago of a computer-generated piece to be played very quietly. The hall-like tones were supposed to calm people and make them relax. It made visiting children stop crying.

Eno is only five years late with this one.

Johann Pachelbel is "in" again. Both Eno and Van Dyke Parks have recorded his "Canon In D".

Just shows you can't keep a good man down, and he's only been down since 1706. His keyboard compositions were a big influence on Bach as well as Eno.

Parks plays "Canon In D" on his new album using a Trinidad Steel band, and at just about its correct speed. Eno plays it at about quarter speed, giving each member of the group a fragment of the score to play and permutate.

I've tried playing it at 78 but finally decided that it sounds best at 45 rpm. Try it out. You can have fun with these records.

THE FOURTH album is "New and Rediscovered Musical Instruments".

On side one Max Eastley strums various instruments of his own invention which are illustrated on the sleeve by drawings.

He seems more interested in the visual arts and I suspect that these sounds just happen to be produced by something which looked good.

I would recommend playing instead the new album of Balinese music called "Bali Barong" on the Disjuncta label which has the most beautiful bells as well as some complex cross-rhythms which really do rock.

Back to Max and he has a track here which sounds like a speeded up tape of someone sawing wood.

Actually it's an elastic aeroplane with a centriphone. (Probably rubber bands). Not very interesting. The Bashet Brothers' home-made musical instruments are more exciting.

David Toop has the last side. There are various prepared and percussion instruments varying from Japanese resting bells to a large lorry hub. Eno plays prepared bass guitar.

The piece is quite pleasant, but since the silences are important it is very annoying to have so much crackling on the pressing.

Dave and the Celaceans (vocal group including Eno) sing a silly song called "Do The Bathosphere" very slowly in a wavery high-pitched voice and slight pop inflexion.

Despite all, this is a very worthwhile new venture by Eno.

Hopefully they will reach the audience he originally intended them for. The albums are available by mail from Ireland Records, Horton Road, West Drayton, Middlesex at £1.99 each plus 40p post and packing each.

Record shops can order them, but very few stock them.

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The Nickelodeon. Pic: JOE STEVENS

The tattoo from the grey lagoon

WELL, IT WAS EITHER THAT OR 'HELLO SAILOR' AGAIN

By ANGIE ERRIGO

GEORG KAJANUS: nickoledeon designer and very clever lad. Pic: BARRY PLUMMER

SAILOR, WHOSE single "Glass Of Champagne" has just entered the NME chart after heavy airplay, have been 'up and coming' practically since they formed two years ago. They scored an early coup by being featured in a BBC *In Concert'* in 1974, returned to the support act slog of tours and attracted renewed interest on the Steve Harley and Cockney Rebel tour earlier this year.

Now, after a well-received run of university gigs and the chart entry of the single they finally look like arriving.

But it must be a bit nerve-wracking to be up and coming and coming and still coming . . .

"Oh, we've been up and coming for years," Henry Marsh laughed. "We've been 'one of the bands of '74', 'one of the bands of '75 — I can see us in about the year 2000 . . . these decrepit old men saying (he adopts a quavering cackle) 'It's definitely going to be next year'."

So, have the near-breaks been frustrating or are the band oozing with confidence? Marsh, who has the posh, articulate manner of a public school background and looks like a seedy, zany Graham Greene character onstage, a graduate student off, is anxious to be honest about their outlook without coming across as "an arrogant pig".

"We knew we had a very original sound when we started. The first thing that made us realise that maybe it was something a bit special was the reaction from the record companies. They decided it was potentially a commercial enterprise, so they immediately got interested in it.

"But in a way, yes, it's been frustrating on and off. As soon as some body says that you've got something that's going to be potentially successful, then the key is that you've got to try for a hit single. It doesn't matter if you think you're a concept band or if you'd like to be an album band like Pink Floyd, for instance.

"We felt we had a slightly specialised sound, but nevertheless we didn't know who our public would be."

Sailor's highly original, rock-carnival sound (not best exemplified by "Glass Of Champagne", which has understandably aroused a number of comparisons with other bands) is centred on the nickelodeon designed and constructed by vocalist-songwriter Georg Kajanus and manned by Marsh and Phil Pickett.

"I play the bass side of if you like," explained the quiet-spoken Pickett when he could get a word in edgewise on the extrovert Marsh, "which really is a keyboard bass using a sythesiser link-up which is part of the nickelodeon.

"There's also an organ effect on it which is worked mechanically from the piano keyboard and a glockenspiel worked by electrical contact. "Henry plays the treble side of the nickelodeon and he also has one or two little gadgets that I don't have on my side. He has a mechanical synthesiser link-up with his piano keyboard.

"We both switch over. When we're playing something I might switch a different effect for Henry because he's using both hands, and vice-versa. The arrangements are worked out so that we know exactly when to switch these things in and out."

"Before we started with the nickelodeon we had completely separate styles. Henry was . . . well, Henry was Henry. Mine was a gospel-influenced piano style."

"It certainly wasn't this barrel organ style which was an inception of Georg's," put in Marsh. "It came with a handful of songs he had, and of course we then got into it and developed it into our own style."

"Georg is a very clever lad. He's very modest, very shy, and it's often easy to forget exactly how much he has actually constructed himself. So many ideas have been thrown in by the group that it's now very much a joint, strong effort.

"The whole group is now aware of an original sound and has lots of ideas to make this thing strong, visually and soundwise. But the basic idea was Georg's."

Kajanus's lyrics are strange vignettes of old cinema themes. Pickett suspects that he learned most of his English from watching American films as a child in Norway, and has retained the influence.

"Some of it probably would be considered to be cliche," he admits, "but I think it's all done quite sincerely. There's a good-time element to the music. Georg has been through all the stages that I think every songwriter goes through, and I think this is his true sort of style."

From the sound and the words grew the theatrical presentation of four quayside characters chronicling a burlesque underworld.

"I can remember the day we agreed to call the band Sailor, to dress as sailors and do all this thing," Marsh recalled, "But I don't know whether at that time we actually realised we were going to have the gall to get up and do it while living in a world of rock musicians clad in Levis, singing songs about where everything else wasn't at."

Sailor are unanimously keen to develop the theatrical aspect of their sound and image, hoping to build up to playing small seasons in theatres rather than rock circuit gigs.

"The original Sailor was very clean-cut," Pickett pointed out. "A sort of Gene Kelly approach, but we wanted to develop it. The music was developing a certain way, together with our stage act, so we developed this waterfront image to still tie in with Sailor but also to have burlesque, vaudeville connotations for the theatrical act."

Suddenly it occurred to Marsh that nobody had mentioned drummer Grant Serpell, who, according to Marsh, is "brilliant, very lovable and has lovely legs."

Marsh wanted to stress that Serpell has the strongest idea about what is commercial and what isn't.

"Without wanting everything to sound plastic and unoriginal, he always seems to be very good when it comes to stopping the band from just going too far. Everyone in the band certainly seems to have found a nice area in which they work."

One of the most intriguing aspects of Sailor is the impressively lucid and intellectual awareness in the band of what is going on, now that they are beginning to break, and what is happening to them.

"Two years ago I had no comprehension of the meaning of pressure on somebody in a successful band," Marsh mused. "I just had a complete vision of it being a straightforward thing. All of a sudden you have a chart entry, you get more money, you play to more people, they like you a lot more. Those are all the egotistical things.

"But the peculiar thing is that we had a Press reception a few weeks ago and I found myself with a smile like Princess Margaret, going 'Hi, really nice to see you'—not knowing the person's name, looking past people when they were talking to me. I was tired because we'd ben flying up and down doing radio interviews — talking about the same thing as if it was new and refreshing every time. "You find you're being torn between the person who functions at home quite naturally and a person who is permanently being confronted by people who see you as a commodity.

"Because of this a personality thing happens. I can see how somebody as sensitive as, say, Steve Harley, or a thousand other artists past and present, can't find the difference between the private self being criticised and the music as a business or an art form being criticised.

"We can make fun about the roles that one has to play. But the pressure is such that eventually one is bound to become impatient. So what's it going to be like if we become really big? It's Catch 22. Our own manager says that if we weren't so analytical we wouldn't suffer every pressure, we wouldn't keep worrying about it. But this is the way we are."

Pickett wryly added: "I'm sure every artist must say this, but it's hard to reconcile the business side of it — on the business level it's just like any other business — with the music, which involves people's emotions. All the time you're selling something, but you're sincere as well."

Worries aside, the band are enthusiastic about their forthcoming February tour.

"Assuming that it's a success," Marsh bubbled, "presumably there'll be a lot of people seeing us for the first time. If they're all singles-buyers I don't know quite what we'll be in for . . . what they'll be expecting from us."

Pickett: "It'll be interesting to see what sort of audience we get, because up to now we've been getting an incredible cross section — from serious students to sailor-outfitted 14-year-old girls with bowler hats from the Harley tour."

HENRY MARSH and (right) PHIL PICKETT: what public school sailors look like off-stage . . . Pic: PENNIE SMITH

Is Rock 'n' Roll Ready For 1976 ?

What has all this to do with all this?

Does anyone care?

MICK FARREN'S IS THE VOICE FROM THE GALLERY

I DON'T know about you, but for some of us 1975 really turned out to be a bitch of a year, and that's a fact. Or maybe you didn't notice.

As far as music was concerned, it seemed to kick off with the release of Dylan's "Blood on the Tracks" and terminate with the qualified disappointment of Bruce Springsteen. A year of upheavals, turn-rounds, disappointments, hopes and, when all is said and done, damn-all to show for it.

Not that this is a complaint about 1975 and its shortcomings, nor is it a piece about Bob Dylan. It isn't a piece about Springsteen either (praise the Lord), or one about my own personal trials and exultations.

I guess you could say it's an examination of what current rock and roll is all about, and what exactly it is relevant to.

Like I said, 1975 was a bitch of a year.

It wasn't one of those grand exhilarating years when it was all going on so fast that there was no time to touch ground and find out what was happening. In that kind of year you couldn't write a piece like this because you were too busy bringing back the word from the front, or too busy doing it to bother to bring back the word.

It also wasn't one of those years when nothing happened at all. In those kind of years you couldn't write a piece like this. It either wouldn't get published or, if it did, you'd get shunned by polite society. In those kind of years, only an attitude of complete terminal ennui would stop you from becoming a social pariah.

Commitment in years like that was a dirty word, and any emotional response above a yawn would be judged positively obscene.

1975 has been neither of these things. At risk of being repetitive, it's been a bitch of a year.

For a start, there really haven't been any dirty words. Sure you could be outrageous, it's just a mild aberration. If you wanted to, you could be committed, another charming idiosyncrasy. 1975 has seemed to be the year when we've been prepared to tolerate just about anything.

The one thing there's been plenty of has been confusion. It's been moving around the planet by the truckload. Even in the private, often hothouse little world of the rock writer, confusion has abounded.

On the surface, one would think that it was a relatively simple act to tell the world at large about the merits or otherwise of a record, artist, live concert, movie or what-have-you.

It shouldn't be hard to tell the public whether Batter Z. and the Dogs' Homes are good, bad, indifferent, or The New Messiahs. Yet we look around and see critics starting to doubt their ability to recognise a Messiah even if he came up and whacked them with his stone tablets.

The relevancy of rock comment, criticism and a rock press, has been seriously questioned, not only in the hangouts of journalists, but in the pages of *Gasbag*, the luxury hotels of the stars, and the air-conditioned warrens of the business manipulators.

Even the hoary old shock question "Is rock dead?" has been dragged out and given an airing.

The key word to this whole problem seems to be *relevancy*.

Before we go any further, let me tell you a little story, and maybe you'll see what I mean.

LIKE A couple of thousand others, I'd gone along to Hammersmith Odeon to see Bruce Springsteen's first U.K. concert.

I came out with somewhat mixed critical feelings and got into a taxi. Frankly I was disappointed, and was trying to work out whether this came from something that was lacking in Springsteen himself, or simply that the show had been oversold to me by the massive promo campaign that had surrounded it.

At the time, it seemed that sorting out what I felt about Bruce Springsteen was somehow important. He had, after all, been referred to as the "future of rock and roll" and appeared simultaneously on the covers of both *Time* and *Newsweek*.

The whole thing was suddenly dragged into a much clearer perspective by the voice coming over the cab driver's radio. The despatcher was giving a blow by blow account of the injured being dragged out of a bombed restaurant. Each time a driver called with some fresh information the dispatcher would relay it to all the other cabs in the network..

The impact of this was immense. It wasn't the usual kind of tidied-up newscast. I was actually hearing what was happening, as it happened. I was seeing the bombing through the direct subjective view of a handful of cab drivers.

Suddenly the importance of Bruce Springsteen shrank to almost nothing. There seemed to be little relationship between the concert I had just seen and the horrific events that were going down on the street.

I couldn't recall ever experiencing a similar feeling after coming out of either a Dylan or an early Rolling Stones' concert. The question in my mind was no longer what had disappointed me about Bruce Springsteen, it had been replaced by a much more important one:

Why did Springsteen — and for that matter, a great deal of modern rock and roll — seem so damned irrelevant to most of everyday life?

This is not intended to be a piece, either good or bad, about Bruce Springsteen. His name is cropping up so often because he seems to be a perfect example of the problem afflicting the contemporary rock scene. He has been touted to us by big business promo men as the ultimate street punk. In the guise of "the new Bob Dylan" he seemed to be credited with a degree of commitment, sensitivity and perception that would surpass even the best work of the sixties.

This promotion was so overwhelming that nobody ever stopped to question exactly what Springsteen was either being committed to, or sensitive and perceptive about.

An analysis of his songs reveals not a precise observation of life on skid row, but a kind of punk fantasy world based not in real life, but on an amalgam of pulp fiction and B movies firmly rooted in the fifties' teenage gang tradition.

This concept may have been developed originally in the context of the street, but, as the CBS promotion campaign began to grow, Springsteen must, by necessity, have been isolated from his roots. Unless he possesses an amazing clarity and tenacity of mind, it would seem impossible for Springsteen (or any other artist in his position) to prevent himself becoming cocooned in record company money, and cut off from the first sources of his creativity.

The earning potential of even a middle-grade rock star has so increased in the last six or seven years that a management/record company is far more inclined to treat their "investments" like so many prize race horses.

This almost total isolation of the artist from his audience must result in his or her music becoming, no matter how good, somewhat irrelevant to what's going on in the outside world.

We're back to that word again.

IN THE sixties it was a lot easier for an artist to stay in touch. It was a time when the music was still controlled by mavericks. On the crucial levels of promotion, production — as well as the musicians themselves — control was in the hands of people from the same background and with very similar ideas.

Bill Graham, Andrew Oldham, Derek Taylor, Spector, and even Epstein set patterns in rock administration that made it possible for people like Lennon, Dylan, Jagger or Jim Morrison to still have solid links with the street.

Today, however, things seem to have changed. A corporation mentality has taken over. Admittedly it's a hip corporation philosophy, but it's a corporation philosophy all the same.

Its attitude to music is one of polish, and giving the customers what they want.

It's an attitude that strips away the rough edges. They are concerned with the smooth distribution of product. Words like 'commitment', 'involvement' and 'art' are, to this kind of corporate mind, bad for business. They cause hassles, they could lower profits.

This has given rise to the technique of totally insulating the artist from the real world. The more the musicians are encouraged to remain in their sheltered worlds, the less trouble they cause and the easier they are to handle.

In many ways it's like a rerun of Hollywood in the 'twenties and 'thirties. Like movie stars and top sports heroes before them, musicians are being encouraged to stay inside a private hothouse environment. It's a superheated world where gossip, scandal, drug habits and breakdowns flourish to exotic proportions. It's a luxurious pen in which are kept the prize, money-earning specimens.

It has little to do with any serious reality.

There seems to be a kind of rule emerging that when rock and roll gets wrapped up in too much money, it begins to lose its guts. The kind of insulation that the corporate salesmen wrap around the musician tends to shut him off from the kind of essential street energy that is so vital to the best of rock and roll.

Occasionally we can see an individual break out of the cocoon and recharge himself from this essential energy source. We have just witnessed Dylan doing this. Lennon does it at regular intervals.

Unfortunately, they are part of a very small minority. It is far easier to call room service at the Hyatt House than to get down on the street and check out the action.

However, it does seem that too long in the Hyatt House can, in creative terms, turn you figuratively blind. The balls go out of the music, and the original fire is replaced by massive displays of sheer money.

The Rolling Stones tour of the Americas, earlier in the year, was an obvious example of what Charlie Murray called "a dinosaur" in his excellent Little Feat piece a few weeks back.

It may have been a magnificent, exciting circus, but on a logistic level it was a vast, blundering, super extravagant, over-consuming thing. It didn't take the 73 people to get Woody Guthrie on the stage.

In a process of gradual evolution, the Stones had felt forced to augment their own unique energy with spectacles like the vast, illuminated folding stages. In the orgy of presentation the Stones' relevancy (that word again) slowly slipped away.

The band that once talked uncompromisingly about the world they saw around them had turned into a Busby Berkeley spectacular.

So is there no hope at all? Is rock and roll on an unalterable course to a neo-Las Vegas?

It damn sure looks like it.

We are currently going through the worst depression since the 'thirties. In global terms, the fear of civil war is probably greater than it was even at the height of '60's paranoia, and in quiet moments I tend to wonder just how long the food, water, air, etc., are going to last.

Do we ever hear any of this reflected in rock and roll? Not often. Most of the time it seems as though all either musician or audience want to deal with is pure escapism.

If that is what everyone wants, then fair enough. I'm not about to argue with the will of the people. You have to admit, though, that the only social significance that can be gleaned out of this is that maybe we've unconsciously started on the last great party before the human race becomes extinct.

I'd be quite happy to lie back and enjoy myself if it wasn't for a small group of musicians who seem to have turned their backs on escapism and are totally related to the enviornment in which they live. They are also producing some of the most exciting music that's around at the moment.

IF BEING plugged into the street is the only way to produce good rock and roll, then reggae is possibly the only kind of music that is still sitting up and taking nourishment.

I have a strange feeling that when we look back and get a perspective on the 1970s it will be Bob Marley who emerges as the "Bob Dylan" of the period.

This is no more a piece about reggae than it's a piece about Bruce Springsteen or the Rolling Stones. One of the problems in getting anywhere below the surface either in reggae or, for that matter, Rastafarianism is that a white boy never really gets a straight answer.

Marley appears to be talking to his own generation in the same way that Dylan talks to his. With Dylan in the mid-sixties it was the proto-freaks that grasped his convoluted symbols. It was alanguage that they, and they alone, understood.

Marley is talking to young West Indian blacks in the same kind of secret language. Unfortunately for the white would-be aficionado, a great deal of this language is unintelligible. We are, after all, the bunch who shipped their ancestors off to Babylon.

One thing does seem to have been established, however. Both Marley and the Rastas have moved the consciousness of their followers to a point beyond the consumer-orientated, leopard-skin-suit-and-diamond-pinky-ring ideology of the Superfly/pimp cult that grabbed American blacks so solidly.

They also seem to be able to hold off the corporation structure. The world of reggae is one of small studios, technical improvisations and for the most part, small struggling labels.

According to the corporation philosophy, this should create frustration and inferior product. In fact, it turns out far more energetic music than anything that comes gift-wrapped out of the high-rise entertainment complexes.

If we take the whole thing a stage further, even the most cursory examination of rock history proves beyond doubt that the most inventive and rigorous periods are those when musicians and producers worked in very similar circumstances as are now prevalent in Jamaica.

The Chuck Berry, Bo Diddley and Howling Wolf classics that came out of Chess Records; the early Stones' material; Spector's first masterpieces and, to a certain extent, even "Blonde on Blonde" were produced in unsophisticated studios and on comparatively small budgets.

In this context, a considerable emphasis had to be placed on the musicians becoming absolutely proficient on a live stage before they could be trusted in a studio.

This kind of recording environment makes impossible both manufactured groups of good-looking incompetents and the marathon fifty-eight hour "if-we-go-on-long-enough-we-might-come-up-with-something" philosophy of album-making.

The question that we face at the moment is whether rock and roll can move back to this simpler, more dynamic method of working and hold back from becoming simply an extravagant show-biz spectacle.

A few isolated purists like Dr. Feelgood have consciously made this move, but they are, unfortunately, very much alone in their dedication. While bands like Queen go on spending the equivalent of the annual wages of a whole factory-full of workers on making an album, far too many musicians are going to be tempted to follow the same course.

There is a slight possibility that the success of Bob Marley may encourage other creative musicians to re-evaluate their situations.

This could be the salvation of rock and roll. It really depends on whether the white boys in rock and roll can once again stop and learn from their black counterparts.

We shouldn't forget that in these terms, Bob Dylan is a lot blacker than Isaac Hayes.

JAZZ

Presenting, on keyboards, briar pipe and chuckles

***MR. PAUL BLEY** (ho ho ho). He tells **BRIAN CASE** how he got on with the Lydian Chromatic Theory way back when, and what he thinks of synthesisers right now. The conversation is conducted good humouredly in corduroy slacks.*

PAUL BLEY, unstyled shock of hair, glasses tipped forward on the nose, pipe, has the air of a boffin on leave from the lab. Everything amuses him. Conversation oils along easily on his rich transatlantic and buttery laughter.

"What are you drinking, Paul?"

"Oh — er, white wine, ho ho ho."

This tall gangling chuckler has been dubbed variously "The James P. Johnson of free playing", and "The Al Haig to Cecil Taylor's Bud Powell".

Paul laughs. "Well, I like all those names."

We are sitting in a nice little Fullers boozer near the Thames. He has his long corduroy shanks stretched out in the aisle, his pipe in his mouth and his past in my hands.

"Was 'Jazz In The Space Age' your first recording?" I ask him. A George Russell record, 1960, on which he plays duets with Bill Evans.

"No — but that's about as early as I care to remember." Private chuckle. "What attracted you to Russell's music?"

"Well, it's the other way round really. I'd just come from California where I had my own group at the Hillcrest Club. I had brought a great deal of new information about improvising back East with me, things that had envolved from working with Ornette Coleman and Don Cherry, plus experiments I had made prior to that time, and which had all crystallised in my own playing.

"My first stop was at the last night of the last jam session of the last year of the Lennox School of Jazz. I even arrived at the last tune — ho ho ho — got the opportunity to play on it — and that led to two or three years of employment. One of the people who'd liked me was George Russell."

"How did you get on with his Lydian Chromatic Theory?" "My own attitude to other people's music was that I played a fantasy of what I imagined it to be, rather than followed it meticulously. I've never taken the trouble to analyse his system." He looked at me waggishly over his specs.

"The composers are usually very happy and tell me I'm the first person to play their system right and I silently smile. I have nothing to forget."

This cat is crazy like a fox.

"Russell is a perfectionist," he continued. "The terms were clearly set out. He said, 'You've got four weeks to learn the music and you can come by and play it for me. If you make a mistake, you don't have the date.' So I immediately rushed home, sat down at the piano and got up four weeks later. Didn't make a mistake." He chuckled. "In fact, there was no way I could make a mistake. I could have played it eight ways."

"Were there problems relating your part to Bill Evans?"

"I knew there would be problems, but I've always had the ability to intuitively get into somebody's playing, whether it's a drummer overshadowing me or a pianist who has attributes I don't have. I always listen very closely to that person so as to put them at their ease, and then begin to manipulate the music so that it becomes more adventurous — but still in a way that keeps them comfortable. It's one of my talents."

Which could account for my sitting here in gym shorts and a Kellogg's space hat, oh yes, Paul is a subtle mover.

"So I just jumped in and started to play with Bill, but I was waited for as he's a remarkable accompanist. I dropped into the Vanguard about a week later and he said, 'I've been looking all over for you. What did we DO on that date'?"

We got onto the Californian experiments. All the history books had got Ornette logged, categorised and evaluated on his first early Atlantic albums. Paul waited 15 years and then released an album, "The Paul Bley Quintet", which pre-dated that lot and turned the whole thing round. Like finding a navel on Adam.

"There was no hurry," said Paul, innocent eyes over canted glasses.

"All right. How did you get together?"

"Well, I had a band in L.A. We played in a club for a number of years and once in a while a guest would come in. In this case Ornette and Don came in on the recommendation of my drummer, Billy Higgins. They came in and had an immediate rapport with the rhythm section. So Carla Bley and I went backstage to a parking lot and entertained the fantasy of firing our meal ticket of two years, phasing them in.

"We knew they weren't commercially viable, but we were all playing fantastically. You know, when we played in a bar in the black section of town, it was the members' habit to leave the room when we came on. Stay on the kerb. You could always tell when our band was on the stand — if there was a big crowd outside the club, we were on." He laughed. "They waited because they liked the club."

"Ornette has avoided the piano since," I said. "Is it because of the fixed pitch?"

"Yes, that's right. But I never found a fixed pitch instrument a problem. With keyboards, you're dealing with overtones. You've got tremendously long strings, all of which are capable of ringing in harmony and in tandem. Of course, that doesn't arise with synthesizers."

One of the revelations of Paul's record is how close to Bird Ornette was playing in 1958.

"Yes, and it's a very important session for that reason. It shows clearly the historical perspective of the players. And at that time, Cherry was the harbinger of new ideas."

With his move East, Paul Bley found himself in demand. Long out of fashion, the West Coast musicians had produced a climate in which experiment could flourish. Some of this, the 12-tone row, the over-academic mergers with European Classical, led up a siding; some of it pointed the way ahead.

Paul joined Jimmy Giuffre's trio to replace Jim Hall. Giuffre, West Coast multi-horn-man, veteran of Shorty Rogers, the Lighthouse, had been seeking alternatives to the harmonic cell-block for a decade: fractured lines, collective ensembles, unstated pulse and a concern for sound that kept his clarinet tethered in the sombre chaluneau register. Paul stayed three years, cut three albums.

"Then I received an offer from Sonny Rollins to become a permanent member of his band. The word was out for either Herbie Hancock or myself to join Miles' band. So we all assembled at Birdland one night, Miles, Rollins, Herbie and myself, to settle the whole thing right there, and it was Rollins' playing that decided me on that job. I was with him for a year, travelled to Japan with him and all across America, and during the whole tour he kept a very low profile in his own playing."

Paul shook his head, like ever been had?

"The only time he really took the hood off was the afternoon when he played with Coleman Hawkins. The man playing there was very competitive, trying in all earnestness to play better than anybody else. From my perspective, Rollins' performance was amazing.

"He'd given no indication of that capacity as long as I'd played with him. What happened that day was not predictable in anybody's mind. He did prove his mettle and amazed everybody, Hawkins included, so that Hawk was hard-pressed to find entrances. He asked me to help him with them, and once he'd found them, he was gung-ho."

Paul puffed on the pipe and contemplated Sonny, his weird strokes, his intermittently flickering fire.

"He's a form of prize fighter. He deals with music inter-personally rather like a fighter uses an adversary in the ring. He's very competitive and he knows his music. You might object to that modus operandi, but it's a valid motivation and we're lucky to have him. There's only one Sonny Rollins now Hawkins and Webster have gone. There's a million Rollins stories. His legend would fill several volumes."

"That record got very hostile reviews at the time," I said. "The critics went on about different generations not making compatible music."

"Yeah, but you couldn't tell that to Norman Granz though. Tell it or sell it." He chortled, peered amusedly at his tartan tobacco pouch. "But historically, from a distance of 15 or 20 years, we don't really mind that Lester and Bird played together on the same Norman Granz concert. It seemed sacriligious at the time, but history has been kind to that conception. I think it'll be kind to this one. Rollins is very much out of Hawkins, and hearing them adjacent like that is a good measure of what their similarities and differences are."

After Rollins, Paul formed his own trio with Steve Swallow and Barry Altschul and released a string of impressive albums for ESP and ECM. He is a subtle, undramatic pianist with a very advanced knowledge of harmony. His work is very much his own: he writes the rules. No cliches, no formulas, and a tight disciplined advance on the heart of the matter.

"The trio was very popular in Europe. Originally, we went for six weeks in 1965, and the next year we were invited for six months. I think we could have played the continent of Europe for ever. I've always kept a residence in New York, but because I'm blessed by an omnipresent press in Europe, it gives the impression that I live in Europe."

Case, the Omnipresent, I rolled that around the mouth with the Fullers.

"I returned home to find a brand new set of circumstances — the synthesizer had been invented by Robert Moog. A critic took me to his doorstep in 1967. Moog gave me a synthesizer and I did the first ever concert in 1969 at Philharmonic Hall."

"What appealed to you in the instrument?"

"I got to it very early. I like to get to things early because the rules haven't been established. You can be part of establishing them. It's a very wonderful training for a pianist, because the parameters of electronic music can be so manipulated that you can have them any way you wish.

"It really gives you an understanding of the pianoforte. You return to that instrument with the idea of explaining numerous possibilities, rather than one."

Which sounds like the return for acid.

"You're not a flamboyant player, and the synthesizer seems to be a flamboyant instrument," I challenged.

"I've tried to increase my range. The phonograph medium can be misleading, because upon re-listening, ornament becomes more ornamental."

I wasn't quite sure where that left me, so I narrowed the eyes to F6 and nodded.

Paul continued. "Even though the synthesizer has millions of possibilities, nevertheless it's a way of choosing a palette for yourself. I have certain pre-requirements, certain expectations, that I made of the instrument before I could perform on it. Certain parameters that it had to be able to meet instantly, certain positions that I could withdraw to so that I was always in control of the instrument. It's an instrument," he concluded, shaking with laughter, "that loves to play by itself."

With his usual thoroughness, he took what he could use and returned to the piano. The way he talks about knowledge, you picture him decanting it from retorts and alembics and transporting it between careful palms in a lead-lined casket. He has a current project for a quartet with Howard King, John Lee and Bill Connors to take to the festivals.

"Not an acoustic band, not an electric band, but a music band," he asserts. A fine ear for cadence, Paul Bley. "You know, I'm considered very romantic. Part of that old problem of communicating on those early discs is due to the fact that nobody really concerned themselves with pressings. What you were getting was an echo of the music. What you have now is an acoustic backlash.

"It began with ECM and continues with other labels in which acoustic music, well-recorded, well-produced, by talented players, is becoming very attractive to the record buyers who can derive pleasure from the aural content of a record, besides the purely emotional and intellectual. People are beginning to tell artists to get up on the stage, play exactly what they want — and not make concessions."

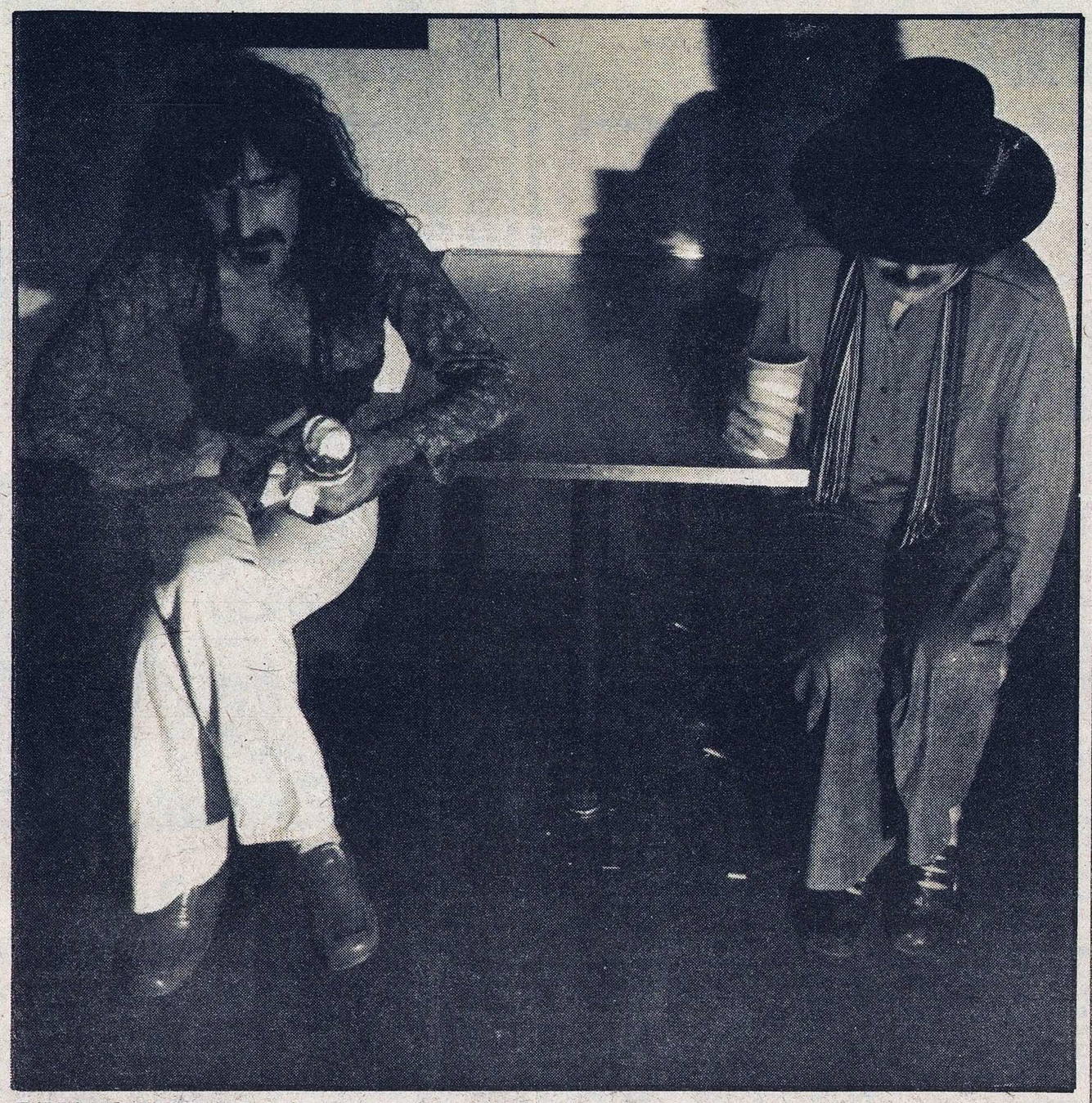
A chuckle welled up: "The audience often turns out to be more sophisticated than the band."

He has recently launched his own label, Improvising Artists

● *Continued on page 33*

BLLLAAAaaaaaahhhhhHHHHHH

You have just heard Captain Beefheart shattering glass objects with the astonishing pitch of his voice



ZAPPA and BEEFHEART on the cover of the "Bongo Fury" album

*Actually, it didn't work. However, something that did work was the re-uniting of **THE CAPTAIN** and **FRANK ZAPPA** a few months ago for a tour and an album, "Bongo Fury". To mark the occasion, **MILES** recalls the duo's strange collaborations in earlier times.*

THE LAST time the Captain and Frank worked together (until their recent tour) was on "Hot Rats", September 1969. I know. I was there.

It was 2am and the Captain's face was green in the fluorescent lighting of the 24-hour snackbar at T.T. & G. Recording studios. The edges of the formica-topped tables were serrated with cigarette burns. The room was overlit and bleak. The microwave oven emitted a low hum.

Out the window the magic starlit skyline of palms and the distant Santa Monica Mountains covered with lights was broken only by the floodlit painting on the theatre playing *Hair*. It was done by Simon & Marijike Koger, "The Fool", and was billed as the "Biggest psychedelic mural in the world".

We were taking a coffee break.

"I can break glass with my voice," said Don (The Capt.) conversationally.

"Really?"

"I once blew out a 1,200 dollar Telefunken microphone."

I had heard the story.

Don gave a demonstration:

"BLLLAAAAaaaaaaaahhhhhhhHHHHHHHHHH!!!"

We inspected the window. Not a crack.

"I'm feeling a little tired." He looked it.

The door burst open. "What the hell was that?"

Frank Zappa had heard the noise in the soundproof control booth on the floor below.

"We were seeing if Don's voice could break a window," I explained, but already Don was thinking about something else and Frank's sudden entry seemed to have disturbed his chain of thought.

"Come and listen to this track," said Zappa. "It looks like we'll be able to put your vocal on tonight." But Don didn't think so. His voice was not in top form and it wasn't till later that he sang "Willie The Pimp" so nice.

Frank was recording "Hot Rats" and Johnny Otis was leading the band: Otis stamped his foot ferociously, just ahead of the beat, revealing beautiful black silk socks held in place by suspenders. His late '50s Tony Curtis hairdo, oiled, black as a Lincoln Continental, bobbed staccato with the beat but not a hair moved out of place.

A little sweat appeared on his brow as he grinned and grimaced with the beat, leaning over and clapping his hands a fraction of an inch from the drummer's ear. The drummer did not look pleased.

Johnny had been working for the Musicians Union for the past few years but was soon to make a comeback. His massive injection of energy soon made this band rock and it wasn't long before Frank was twiddling the knobs and explaining: "I'll just make a test mix before we go."

Frank goes out into the studio to discuss the positioning of the microphones:

"We'll put the Electrovoice there, pointing upwards to catch the sound of the saxophone as it bounces off the ceiling, after bouncing off the wall. That's how they made it sound so greasy in the '50s . . ."

The sax player was positioned facing the wall.

Frank's cigarette burned a brown line in the formica.

He stood alone in the studio with his guitar, his wah-wah pedal and his cans on. Not quite alone, sitting in the far corner, absolutely still, maybe even asleep, sat Don Van Vliet.

Frank played a fine solo, listened to it back and then edited on a new ending.

Sometime in the middle of the night, Gail showed up in the big soft Buick. Steering with the palm of her hand she spun the huge air-conditioned power-braked and steered monster effortlessly up the twists and bends of Laurel Canyon Blvd until we made the final turn at the top and caught a catherine wheel glimpse of the necklaces of light laid out in the valley below before plunging into the dense foliage which conceals all the inhabitants of Laurel Canyon from each other.

"He's burned them all," muttered Frank.

"You didn't have photocopies?" Frank and Gail talk privately.

"No . . . Years of work."

"Are you sure he's done it?"

"Yep. He told me tonight. He did it two weeks ago."

Captain Beefheart had burned the only copies of hundreds of the songs that he had written. Frank continued to lament. It was obvious from his distress that Beefheart is just about the only contemporary of his that he regards as a creative genius. Happily a few days later there seemed to be some doubt about whether the songs were really destroyed or not.

ANOTHER NIGHT AT FRANK'S PLACE

CAPTAIN BEEFHEART and Frank Zappa were to have a business meeting. Hours went by before they emerged and Frank immediately took Herb Cohen, master of Bizarre business, aside for another one. Beefheart and I took a walk out on the back lawn. Georgia, Frank's Alsatian dog, sniffed around us. It was 4am.

"Everyone is out to burn. All artists get burned. All art gets burned." It seemed as if he hadn't really grasped what had been going on at the business meeting at all. He looked worried and distracted.

The problem was "Trout Mask Replica". The Capt. didn't like the way it was being marketed. "They were selling me like a freak alongside that madman Wild Man Fischer and the GTOs." At the time Beefheart was not even happy about the album itself. In a later interview he said: "Zappa wanted to pretend that he had done 'Trout Mask Replica', on which he had done nothing but go to sleep at the mixing board.

"It was *way* over his head. Not really over his head, just too unstructured and telepathic for him because he's so formed and regimented. . ."

Frank did have problems producing the album, such recording techniques as singing in one room with the door closed and having the microphone in the other offended his sense of studio professionalism as well as giving a lot of hiss from the high levels needed.

When I asked him about this example Beefheart maintained: "Well to me, that's just the way it is."

Last week I asked him if "Trout Mask" was really a Zappa album.

"No, he let me have completely what I wanted to do on it. He wanted to make it more, you know the way he is, he wanted excellent recording techniques and stuff but I wanted to do it the way it is so . . . He threatened to remix that album! He's funny!

"It was released again here you see. I like that album a lot. And I definitely appreciate Frank allowing me that out. Nobody else would have.

"At the time I was naive to money, as I am now, and naive to business and whatnot and I would have liked to have taken a lot longer to put that album out, I would have liked to . . . but I would have probably ruined it if I'd had the time!" He roars with laughter.

The Zappa-Beefheart friendship is well-known to one and all but just in case you've forgotten I'll run through it real fast:

Zappa invented Captain Beefheart's name around the time that Beefheart moved to Cucamonga to work with Zappa on those two unlikely projects, a film called *Captain Beefheart Meets The Grunt People* and a rock and roll group called The Soots, an idea they had first kicked around when they were at Antelope Valley High School out near the Edwards Airforce base, north of Los Angeles.

Zappa had a little studio out in the desert, called Studio Z, and here recorded hours of tape of himself and Beefheart playing together — sounding like early Rolling Stones R&B except with Beefheart's powerful four and a half octaves roaring over everything.

Zappa now has plans to release them as a 15-record set (of course).

Beefheart: "Just before I came on this tour Frank and I had a get-together thing, a happening. It was really interesting because he was finding out if I remembered these things, and of course I remembered everything.

"I even remember the little mouse that was living in the place he was living. It was a quiet little mouse. We used to feed it cheese."

Zappa was finally busted for making a pornographic tape and went down for ten days. His little five-track studio didn't have much business and he was starving.

Beefheart remembers: "I was there when he picked his first guitar up, 15 years ago. That was in the desert — it was over on a little street by the fairgrounds where they have the rodeos and things."

THE GRAND REUNION

"I HADN'T spoken to him or seen him for five years. I was up painting and writing and doing all those things and I just hadn't come down to Southern California. The minute I came down there we went on a big tour. Ha, that was fun! I'd been with a group for so many years that it was nice to get away and be free again with a very intelligent person. A very old friend, let's see, he's a little older than me. I think one month. He's a Sagittarius and I'm a Capricorn.

"I just called him up and told him I'd like to see him and he says, 'Well great, come down and hear this album I'm working on', and I said, 'Well, yeah, I'd like to, but I've gotten out of the business. I'm not gonna be in the music business anymore', and he says, 'Oh no, you can't do that', and I said, 'Well I think that's what I'm gonna do'. So Frank said, 'Well come down and hear some records, you know, we'll go on a tour!'

"I said, 'No, I couldn't do that! I couldn't do that!' but when I went down he talked me into it real quick, because he started playing the guitar and I thought, 'Well, hell. I'm going!' Like the Pied Piper, I mean to hear that thing every night? Hoho! . . . I think he's probably the best guitar player on this planet!"

Zappa's story about the reunion is of course quite different: "He apologised for all the garbagio and asked for a job." He was auditioned just before Hallowe'en. "He flunked. See, he had a problem with rhythm and we were very rhythm orientated. Things have to happen on the beat.

"I had him come up on the bandstand at our rehearsal hall and try to sing 'Willie The Pimp' and he couldn't get through it. I figured if he couldn't get through that I didn't stand much chance of teaching him the other stuff."

But Zappa tried him again in the spring. "Although he still has trouble remembering words and making things happen on the beat, he's better. Just before the tour I tried him again and he squeaked by."

At Knebworth Beefheart was surprised to hear the above. "Imagine there being an audition for people who've known one another for that many years. If he did audition me I didn't notice!"

Well, they say that the first 20 years are the hardest and now that they had so much fun together on the tour, maybe Frank and Don will settle down together with all their holes open and stop bad-mouthing each other.

Brilliant as it is, "Bongo Fury" is only a beginning of what this pair could do together.

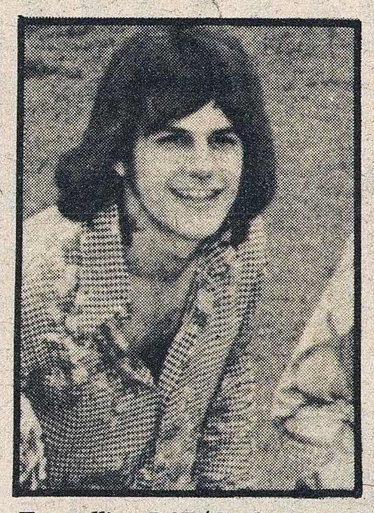
SOUL SNIPS

■ MECCA's move into the Northern Sounds' scene continues with regular Tuesday night sessions at the Middlesbrough Tiffany's in Linthorpe Road.

■ HOT NEW York producers Tony Sylvester (ex-Main Ingredient) and Bert "Supercharts" De Coteaux are producing Albert King now he has quit Stax and joined the new Utopia label. Meanwhile, the National Planters' Bank, who are still owed several million dollars by Stax, have put the Memphis soul label's East Music publishing subsidiary up for public auction to help wipe out the debt.

■ THE delicious June Pointer has been forced to quit the Pointer Sisters due to continued ill health, suffering from extreme mental and physical exhaustion.

■ OUT on a limb is Johnny Bristol who split from MGM due to disputes over the way the company promoted his product, he being their only black artist, to retain his own independent publishing. Bristol had a new contract lined up but the deal fell through and he is now seeking an alternative outlet.



Top selling R&B/Soul single of 1975 in the US of A was KC & Sunshine's "Get Down Tonight' which beat Love Unlimited, Grover Washington, Gwen McCrae and the Isleys in the run-in for top spot.

Not bad going for a white boy huh? KC — alias Casey — I pictured above.

■ VAN McCoy is set to produce the next Aretha Franklin album with sessions set for New York while Thom Bell has been busy producing Dionne Warwicke's latest, both ladies seeking for revivals of past glories.

■ MARVIN Gaye and ace film-score and jazz arranger Quincy Jones appeared together for the first time in a benefit concert in aid of the Centre For Self-Determination at the Cow Palace in San Francisco. Jones first came to fame in the soul world through his work with long-time friend Ray Charles.

■ RISING costs — especially postage — are hitting the various low circulation specialist soul magazines but Chris Savory for one is soldiering on, using record auction sales to cover the losses incurred by his admirable *"Hot Buttered Soul"* publication. The present issue promises Okeh and Ric Tic label listings, an interview with Billy Butler, of "Right Track" fame, and a small ads section which lists hundreds of rare records for sale. Now priced 25p per issue, the mag is available from Chris at 67 Albert Terrace, Wolstanton, Newcastle, Staffs ST5 8AY.

■ Claimed to be the "First ever soul concept album" — which it isn't — the Miracles' "City Of Angels" set (Tamla Motown STML 12010) is a radical departure from their usual stylings, verging close to easy-listening pop at times in its sound but carrying worthwhile message-type lyrics. Basically the album tells the tale of a young man who goes to Los Angeles seeking fame and fortune in the entertainment world and it covers such subjects as sexual diversion, drugs and business ripp-offs. Pretty potent stuff but I wish the music had been stronger so as to put the lyrical point more strongly.

The whole set was written and conceived by Miracles' veteran Pete Morre and their new boy Billy Griffin with Freddie Perren producing.

SOUL CHARTS

US R&B TOP TWENTY

1	(3)	LOVE ROLLERCOASTER Ohio Players (Mercury)
2	(5)	WALK AWAY FROM LOVE David Ruffin (Motown)
3	(1)	I LOVE MUSIC ..... O'Jays (Phila. Int'l)
4	(4)	FULL OF FIRE ..... Al Green (Hi)
5	(6)	WAKE UP EVERYBODY ..... Harold Melvin and The Bluenotes (Phila. Int'l)
6	(7)	LOVE MACHINE ..... The Miracles (Tamla)
7	(9)	SING A SONG ..... Earth Wind & Fire (Columbia)
8	(2)	LET'S DO IT AGAIN .. The Staple Singers (Curtom)
9	(8)	THAT'S THE WAY I LIKE IT ..... KC & The Sunshine Band (TK)
10	(11)	DO YOU KNOW WHERE YOU'RE GOING TO (THEME FROM MAHOGANY)..... Diana Ross (Motown)
11	(18)	LOVE TO LOVE YOU BABY Donna Summer (Oasis)
12	(10)	PART TIME LOVE ..... Gladys Knight & The Pips (Buddah)
13	(15)	YOU SEXY THING ..... Hot Chocolate (Big Tree)
14	(14)	FLY, ROBIN, FLY Silver Convention (Midland Int'l)
15	(15)	WHAT'S COME OVER ME ..... Margie Joseph & Blue Magic (Atco)
16	(17)	VALENTINE LOVE ..... Norman Connors (Buddah)
17	(25)	TURNING POINT ..... Tyrone Davis (Dakar)
18	(22)	ONCE YOU HIT THE ROAD Dionne Warwick (WB)
19	(30)	MAKE LOVE TO YOUR MIND Bill Withers (Columbia)
20	(20)	HAPPY ..... Eddie Kendricks (Tamla)

Charts courtesy of "CASHBOX"

Hi, I'm Patti. Welcome to my make-up

Pix : JOE STEVENS

girl-next-door-ish than ever before.

Between seeing them in London and Amsterdam in the spring and now, I'd heard sundry folks of my acquaintance mumble stuff about Labelle being naught but "this year's Pointer Sisters". It's a pity and a shame that those folks couldn't have been around to see de goils hustling their way through "Messin' With My Mind" with the total authority of an act who have performed the essential function of *self-creation* i.e who are interpreting a unique personal vision of themselves.

The Pointers are a nostalgia act; Labelle are musically and conceptionally entirely self-sufficient.

Plus they rock, which always helps.

Contrary to previous expectations, the band aren't miming; they're plugged in and wailin' fuh real. Since London they've traded in their old (white) bass player for a new (black) one, and added a guitarist to play lead.

He's one of those crazed spade kids who fell in love with Jimi Hendrix, bought a white Strat and really worked on their chops, and sure enough he's got enough of it down to make Robin Trower **really** look sick.

Anyone looking for a really good neo-Hendrix guitarist would be advised to check out young black guitarists from Watts or Harlem, because their white equivalents are more into the noise than the funk — and anyone who didn't suss that Hendrix's noise elements wouldn't have worked unless they were built on top of his funk/blues foundations has definitely, but definitely fallen into the wrong fish tank.

The band, in short, are the proverbial choinin' oin' of boinin' fonk (the bequeathing of this phrase unto common parlance may well be James Taylor's most notable contribution to rock) and when Patti starts to send a stinging lead vocal diving and darting into the velvet clouds emitted by Nona and Sarah, you might say without excessive fear of contradiction that the joint is rockin'. You could even go so far as to say that it's goin' round and round.

They do "Messin' With My Mind" five times and then they wrap it and bustle away to clamber into new rig-outs.

Time passes.

Having metamorphosed, they return. Only now there's four of them.

Sarah is wearing — goddam, it's impossible to write about Labelle without feeling like Lisa Robinson at least half the time — Sarah is wearing a kind of exploded red satin Shirley Tem-

By CHARLES SHAAR MURRAY

IT HAPPENED in Hollywood.

To be precise it happened on *The Cher Show.*

Sadly enough, the Cher Show doesn't get shown over here, which only goes to show that someone somewhere is culturally underprivileged to an almost alarming extent. Imagine not being able to watch the Cher show! Gawwwwwwdam — as Gruntin' Gregg would probably say if you asked him nicely enough.

What goes down is that at 7.00 p.m. on the East Coast and 8.00 p.m. on the West Coast every Sunday night, Cher undulates delicately into countless thousands of living rooms all over God's own country for an hour of comedy, dance and song (all terms used in their loosest possible sense, I assure you).

The whole deal just reeks of sheer, unadulterated GLAMOUR (that's pronounced "guh-*lam*-urr", of course).

There's Cher swanning through the proceedings, armour-plated midriff quivering with aristocratic disdain, all fingernails and cheekbones, while the guests stars, shell-shocked into subservience, stumble around her like dutiful drones . . . oh honey! It's faaaaaaaaaaabulous!

Take the night The Pointer Sisters were on, f'rinstance. First they mime to "How Long (Betcha Got A Thing On The Side)" (an impeccable hunk of claustrofunk) and then they return to — get this — back up Cher on an Elton John medley performed against a nightmarish set decorated with Elt motifs like top-hats, catwalks tricked out like piano keyboards and the like.

Cher gets to sing all the leads and wear the best costume, despite the fact that any of the Pointers could out-sing her from 20 paces any goddam day of the week, Jack. I mean, fergit it, man. The whole thing is ridiculous.

It's in the rules. This is the Cher show, and the host never gets shown up by the guests. That's right out. Except that things got a bit real when Labelle came on.

OKAY. It's some absurd hour early in the morning on the CBS-TV lot in Hol-lee-wood, and you are *schlumped* somewhere in the plebs' viewing area at a taping of the Cher Show. Labelle are this week's Special Guests and their band are set up on the stage clanking and honking and banging their way through a sound check preparatory to running through the backing for "Messin' With My Mind", Labelle's Latest Single.

They play it as fonkily as it is possible for anybody to play anything at 11 a.m.

At this point, enter Labelle stage left.

You remember Labelle. There's Patti — the voice — with a new hairstyle, Nona — the songs — and Cher's gonna haveta go some to beat *those* cheekbones, and Sarah — the navel — looking more ineffably

Sunny and Chair

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ple arrangement which is fairly absurd and not at all sexy (which renders it totally unique within her wardrobe), Nona's done up to the nines (you've got great nines, Nona) in outtasite vines of an impecably insect-like caste, and Patti would make the ideal table-lamp.

The fourth one is wearing — stop it! *Stop it!* — what looks like an acid nightmare of all Labelle's costumes boiled into one immaculately weird garment. It boasts a Patti-type headdress, Nonoid wings and an expanse of tanned epidermis that reaches down from beneath the halter top to (if I may phrase sa as not to offend) to several inches below the subject's navel.

Gawwwwwwwwdam. If Gregg could see her now! Yes, readers, it's Cher herself, and she's actually going to sing with Labelle! Oh goody!!

She looks tired and careworn. Behind the camera, a stage-hand is shuffling a set of idiot cards on which are scrawled excerpts from the lyric of Nona's "Can I Speak To You Before You Go To Hollywood?", a highlight number from their 1974 "Pressure Cookin' " Album.

Here's how it opens. Cher is alone at stage centre, preening. There is no other word to describe it. She is *preening*. And then Nona saunters into shot softly singing, "*Have you got a minute, my friend?*"

Beautiful. Labelle have turned Cher into the *object* of the song, made her serve as the illustration of what the song's about ("going to Hollywood" using Holywood as a state of mind as opposed to a geographical location, which in many ways it is anyway).

She turns around to sing her answering couplet, the stage-hand holds up the wrong card and . . . *cruncho*. Halt city.

Those glossy lips part. That satin brow wrinkles. She speaks.

"Oh *shit,*" says Cher.

They roll it again.

This time they build up the song around her, singing to and at her until Patti scoots in batting her eyes, waving her arms and screaming fir to beat the bznd, worrying Cher like a dog outvibing a parked car.

Cher doesn't know whether to get down and join the backing vocals or to keep preening. In the end she links arms and gets down into the "*I believe in you*" sequence and manages to regain a certain amount of face. Even though the director cuts through on the intercom and instructs Labelle to stand a little closer to the band in case they up-stage Cher.

At least he didn't tell them that they were singing a little too well and could they please hold it down a little, hmmm?

Next number they do "Are You Lonely" with Cher doubling up on Nona's low harmony.

AND ONCE more in Television City, Labelle find themselves on the set of *Soul Train*.

"Soul Train" is this zappy black music show where the hippest (i.e. bestdressed and best dancers) spade kids in L.A. swarm all over the studio dancing and applauding on cue while an assortment of acts mime to their latest and greatest on cue.

There's a giant fluorescent backdrop saying, "Soul Train" and a sort of stylised locomotive in front of which the show's compere/producer, Don Cornelius, makes his announcements.

Cornelius is really a credit to his race. He's quiet, well-spoken and courteous, and in his well-cut grey suit could doubtless perform a remarkable impersonation of a black estate agent. He says things like, "Let's put our hands together, gang, and give a really warm *Soul Train* welcome to . . ." and is more than somewhat curt to the help.

The kids are great, though. There's one with "Tyrone The Bone" on the back of his jumpsuit and he executes the most remarkable gymnastics with a straight face, remaining totally oblivious to the fact that he never gets on camera. The chicks are outtasite too.

Labelle and their band are miming their way through "Messin' With My Mind", and going through more technical hassles than they had laying live on *The Cher Show* (or "Chair Show", and Ms Hendryx would have it. She always refers to Cher as "Chair.")

It seems that whenever the backing track gets turned up high enough for the girls to get any kind of groove going it sets up some kind of feedback with the live vocals. Cornelius repeats his intro word-for-word each time with an ever-pincreasing air of seething annoyance slicing through his well-programmed suavity each time.

Eventually they get it worked out, and the girls get through "Mind," "Good Intentions" and "Slow Burn", getting interviewed by the audience (a regulation occurence on *Soul Train*) in the process. The kids want to know about Elton John, where they get their clothes and when they're going to make a live album.

Other *Soul Train* guests include Minnie Riperton, who squeaks angelically in front of an elaborate set vaguely reminiscent of her last album cover, and Laurence Hilton-James, one of the stars of *Welcome Back, Kotter*, a TV show reminiscent of an American "*Please Sir*" which stars Jewish comic Gabriel Kaplan as a former schoolboy punk who returns to his old school to teach his old class and Hilton-James (Dishann Caroll's son, if anyone cares) as one of the primo bad-boys among his charges.

Cornelius gives him his intro four times (referring to the show as Welcome *Home* Kotter each time). While the intro is being filmed Hilton-James sits to one side very pointedly not signing autographs.

Soul Train goes to more contrived lengths to mimic an explosive spontaneity than any other TV show I can recall. What they should've done, accourse, is *schlep* a crew out to the Ahmanson Theatre to film Labelle's opening night there (or, presumably any of the other nights they did).

IT's BECOME a truism to state that "every freak in (insert name of town) came out to see Labelle", at the Ahmanson Theatre but there was an unprecedented turnout of glittroids (including the hitherto-unfamiliar sub-species of "black glittroid" in that audience). There was also Chair, who entered to a standing ovation at half-time, Greggless in Gaza.

The first half of the show was an abridged version of their old "Nightbirds" show, as displayed to British and European audiences last spring. Their band is a hell of a lot better than it used to be, which meant for a surer power-drive, a firmer foundation for the vocal pyrotechnics.

Labelle explode. They carom off each other like a pinball in control of its own destiny, ricochetting onwards and upwards. Whether they're opening up the second half swathed in rags for "Slow Burn", perfectly pacing the drama of "Can I Speak To You Before You Go To Hollywood?" or keeping their heads when all about them is falling too pieces, they do it like it ought to be done.

It's just a shame that doing TV means that you have to filter your energy through so many draining screens before it gets from you to the audience. But then, hey! That's Hollywood.

But then Cher doesn't live do much live work any more.

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Cropper

● *Continued from page 13*

made up something. There was a line in there 'When I lost someone just like you' which is nothing at all to do with the song. In those days we cut everything live and we left it in there because it fitted feel wise. It would have meant re-cutting the song just to change that one line."

The thought of Otis forgetting the lyrics cracks Cropper up, "A lot of those songs he made up on the night. Nowadays if an artist forgets a lyric it's 'Stop the band, stop everything.' With Otis it didn't matter. He'd never stop and consequently nothing ever sounded like a mistake.

"We always cut Otis live. In the later years when we were doing Carla, Johnny Taylor and stuff like that a lot of those tunes were tracks. And when we cut those tracks a lot of the time we didn't even know what the final lyrics were going to be.

"The last few sessions we did with Otis there were some tracks made that overdubs were laid on. Things like 'Champagne And Wine'. We did the basic track and did the horns later but Otis didn't really overdub his voice.

"In the year before his death he'd had a throat operation and couldn't sing for a while. When he recovered he was singing really good. We cut the sessions with 'Dock Of The Bay' and he had a week offf. He suggested that we re-do some of the vocals he'd cut before the operation. Otis said they were kind of bad. They weren't. They were good, but we went in and re-did 14 tunes in one week. Everybody talked about Otis having an album in the can after his death — well, that was the album. Some of it still hasn't been released."

Presumably Cropper's referring to the "Dock Of The Bay" album which came out in 1968, the year after Otis's death, and which contained eight previously unreleased cuts.

Cropper reckons it's possible that there is still some unreleased Redding material around. "Basically everything we did on Otis got released but there were a couple of things that we made only one or two cuts of and went on to record another song which came up better, and it didn't get on an album but got stuck on the shelf. Nobody even cared. Nobody even wanted to hear it because Otis's stuff was so good that you didn't worry about the bad stuff."

Redding's appearances with Cropper and the rest of the MGs were rare indeed. And usually he toured with another band. He did make it to Britain and Europe with the MGs in 1966, and he played 1967's Monterey pop festival months before he died.

His billing at Monterey was unusual in that the remainder of the acts were all in some way connected with psychedelia.

Redding closed the festival and went down a storm, once and for all proving the universality of his music. Cropper remembers the day.

"We didn't know the audience wouldn't be a soul crowd until we got there and found out. But those people were aware of us for the simple fact that they sat in the rain for three hours to hear us play. We were the last act on and the park commission had already said the lights were going out at such and such a time, and everybody said, 'You're not going to do that.' They were really worried about a riot.

"The guy who was running the event came up and said just Otis was going to play and our numbers would have to be cut. Otis wasn't having any of that. He said, 'We do the whole show or that's it. This is my boys. This is my band and you're gonna hear these boys.' And we went on and did it.

1970, BOOKER T and The MGs: (from left) Booker T. Jones, Donald 'Duck' 'dunn, Cropper and Al Jackson

We went on into the late hours and they didn't shut the power. Everybody was just rocking and it was raining like crazy. And they sat there very patiently and listened and dug it.

"You can tell how much energy is there when you listen to the live album" (unfortunately Warners have never released the album over here One side features Otis backed by Booker T and The MGs, the other is a live side of Hendrix's magnificent performance at the festival.) "They were some good old days, I tell ya.

"I wish Al Jackson was here 'cause he knew more Otis Redding stories than anybody. Everyday with him was just incredible. There was never a dull moment with him and he's probably . . In my mind I've always felt this way and I saw it more after Otis's death than I did at the time 'cause I took it for granted at the time — but Otis as a black man was probably the most non-prejudiced human being I ever met in my life.

"When my close friends who didn't know Otis used to ask me what he was like, all I used to say was in terms of him as a human being.

"I don't know man, he was a person of the world. He stood for so much. People looked up to him in everything. He was a really good person."

OF COURSE Redding wasn't the only person Cropper worked with at Stax. The list is much longer and so is the list of songs he composed, classic soul songs which were for a time the repertoire for every aspiring mid-Sixties British band, songs like "Don't Fight It," "Midnight Hour," "Knock On Wood," "99½ (Won't Do)," "634-5789," a song recorded by Redding and Wilson Pickett, and one which originally the singer didn't have too much time for.

Cropper: "We sat up all night long, Junior Walker, Eddie Floyd and myself. We were in the studio till about five in the morning and we wrote '634-5789' and made a demo of it. Wilson was in town and came and listened to the song. We played him the demo, showed him the lyrics. He took the lyrics, watered them up and threw them in the waste can, said, 'What did you give me this piece of shit for?'

"We'd already made him four hit records. Eddie was ready to kill him. He was going to knock his head off. And I said, 'Cool it. Just cool it.' Wilson got totally pissed off and left and went to the hotel room. I finally got Eddie calmed down.

"That afternoon I called Wilson and said we've got to get things straight. The two of them got together as if nothing had ever happened. I picked up Eddie to take him to the studio and on the way down saw a Coca Cola sign saying '99½ Won't Do.' That's where the title came from. We wrote the tune that night, cut it the next day along with '634 5789'."

Cropper had no idea exactly how many songs he's had published, and as some kind of answer fishes in his bag and produces a pad, on a page of which are written 15 song titles; "Knock On Wood," "Don't Fight It," "Fa Fa Fa Fa Fa (Sad Song)," "Green Onions," "Hip Hug Her," "In The Midnight Hour," "Just One More Day," "Mr Pitiful," "Melting Pot," "See Saw," "Dock Of The Bay," "634 5789," "Soul Limbo," "Time Is Tight."

He says they've all been top ten records.

Since leaving Stax, Cropper's time has been split between producing and playing sessions. For a three-hour session he gets 100 dollars, double the union rate. When you consider the royalties he must continually receive over the years, Steve Cropper must be a very rich man.

And he likes his money too. Somehow the conversation turns to Tom Jones, the Welsh MOR singer who in the past has recorded several Cropper songs. At the mention of his name Cropper exclaims, "God bless old Tom, he's made me so much money!"

As a producer Cropper's career has been both eclectic and erratic. His production of The Staples Singers was a real triumph but his one-off album with Jeff Beck was questionable and afterwards Beck put it down — but then Beck isn't renowned for praising those he's worked with. Cropper, however, considers Beck among the best, saying, "If I could play like that I'd rule the world. I'm producing him, sitting there and watching him and seeing things I don't believe. I'm watching his hands do things, converting it in my mind, and I'd say, 'You can't get that note out of that right there.' I couldn't believe it. Jeff came off with some of the most ungodly, off-the-wall sounds that I've ever heard. And I'm sure there's no other guitar player that can do the same thing."

This year has seen Cropper work with a long-time admirer of his, Rod Stewart. And not only did he play on the album, but he helped set up with producer Tom Dowd (a friend and colleague of Cropper's since the Stax days when he engineered much of Otis's material) the musicians who played on "Atlantic Crossing."

He has good words for Stewart. "His energy is incredible. He just never stops."

It wouldn't come as a total surprise if Cropper is one of the musicians Stewart chooses to work with live on stage now that he has split with The Faces. The singer wanted him on the band's recent US tour, but Ron Wood said no, preferring to work instead with Jesse Ed Davies.

Perhaps Wood would have felt outclassed because when you draw up a list of guitar heroes it just wouldn't be on to exclude Steve Cropper.

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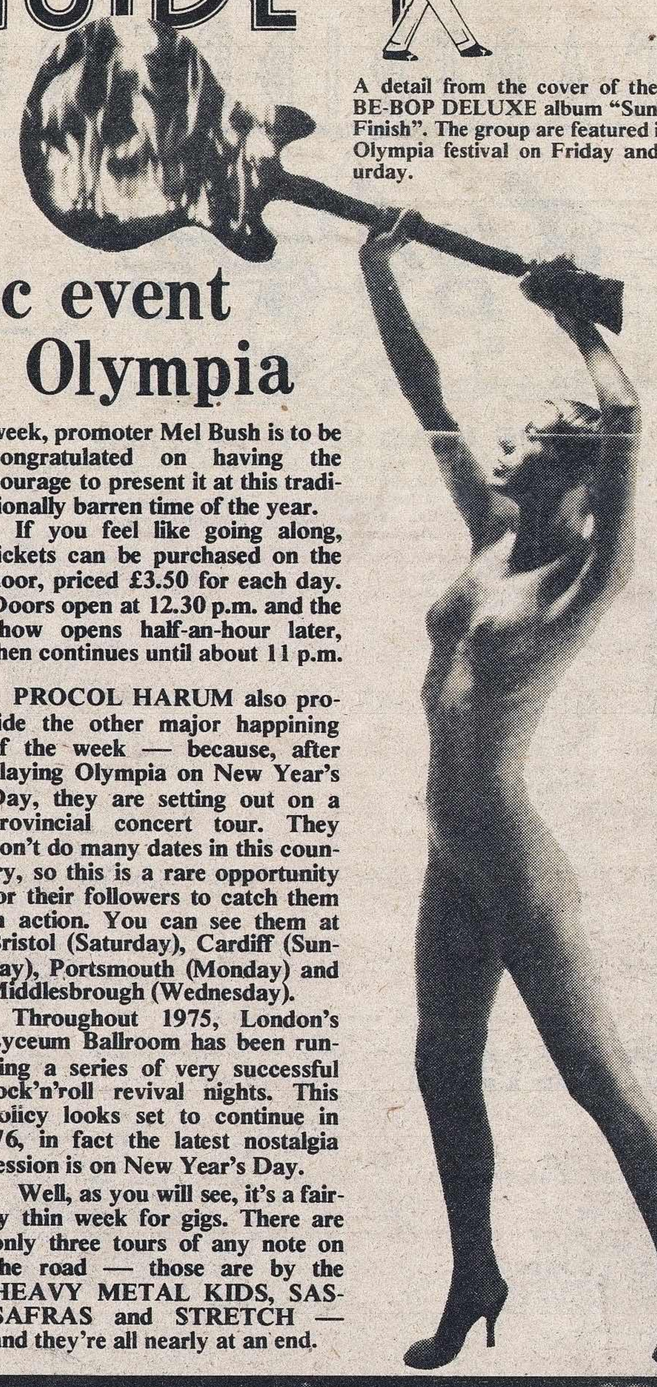
NATIONWIDE GIG GUIDE

Far left:
PAUL RODGERS (Bad Company)
Immediate left:
DAN McCAFFERTY (Nazareth)
Bottom left:
BARCLAY JAMES HARVEST
Bottom right:
PROCOL HARUM



A detail from the cover of the new BE-BOP DELUXE album "Sunburst Finish". The group are featured in the Olympia festival on Friday and Saturday.

British Music event continues at Olympia

CHRISTMAS is over, but the gig circuit is still struggling to get back to normal after a holiday break that almost brought it to a standstill. The big event this week is the continuation of the Great British Music Festival at London's Olympia, which started on New Year's Eve and continues until Saturday.

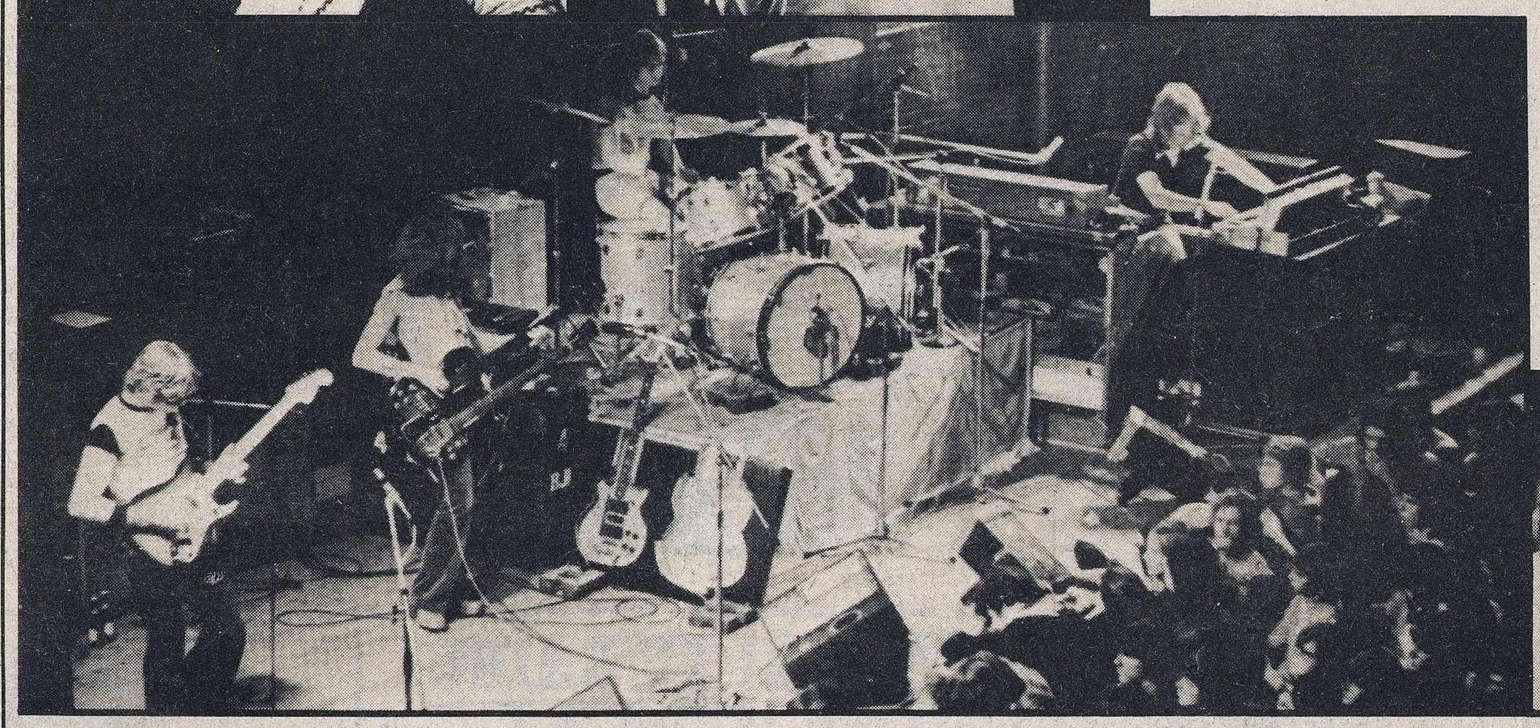
Thursday's bill features PROCOL HARUM, BARCLAY JAMES HARVEST, BAKER-GURVITZ ARMY, JACK THE LAD, JOHN MILES and SNAFU. And this is followed on both Friday and Saturday by BAD COMPANY, NAZARETH, RONNIE LANE'S SLIM CHANCE, PRETTY THINGS, BE-BOP DELUXE and CHARLIE. A very impressive line-up by any standards and, as we said last week, promoter Mel Bush is to be congratulated on having the courage to present it at this traditionally barren time of the year.

If you feel like going along, tickets can be purchased on the door, priced £3.50 for each day. Doors open at 12.30 p.m. and the show opens half-an-hour later, then continues until about 11 p.m.

PROCOL HARUM also provide the other major happining of the week — because, after playing Olympia on New Year's Day, they are setting out on a provincial concert tour. They don't do many dates in this country, so this is a rare opportunity for their followers to catch them in action. You can see them at Bristol (Saturday), Cardiff (Sunday), Portsmouth (Monday) and Middlesbrough (Wednesday).

Throughout 1975, London's Lyceum Ballroom has been running a series of very successful rock'n'roll revival nights. This policy looks set to continue in '76, in fact the latest nostalgia session is on New Year's Day.

Well, as you will see, it's a fairly thin week for gigs. There are only three tours of any note on the road — those are by the HEAVY METAL KIDS, SASSAFRAS and STRETCH — and they're all nearly at an end.



THURSDAY

CARDIFF Tito's Club: WISPER
CORK City Hall: RORY GALLAGHER
ERDINGTON Queens Head: HOOKER
FIFE Seaways Lundin Lake: CHRIS BARBER BLUES BAND
LONDON CAMDEN Dingwalls: D'DANCER
LONDON CANNING TOWN Bridge House: BONE IDOL
LONDON DRURY LANE New London Theatre: BRUCE FORSYTH
LONDON EUSTON RD. Bettina's: MEANSTREAK
LONDON HAMMERSMITH Red Cow: POODLES
LONDON ISLINGTON Hope & Anchor: KILBURN & THE HIGH ROADS
LONDON KENSINGTON Olympia: PROCOL HARUM/BARCLAY JAMES HARVEST/BAKER GURVITZ ARMY/JACK THE LAD/JOHN MILES/SNAFU
LONDON STRAND Lyceum: REMEMBER THIS/ ROCKIN' DEVILS/FLYING SAUCERS/ CADILLAC
ROYSTON Attic Folk Club: FLAKY PASTRY
WORTHING Assembly Hall: STRETCH/TONGE

FRIDAY

BRITTON FERRY Rugby Club: WITHERED MAN
BURNLEY Circulation Club: SASSAFRAS/SAM APPLE PIE
CARDIFF Tito's Club: WISPER
CORK City Hall: RORY GALLAGHER
CRAWLEY White Knight: ROCKING PNEUMONIA
DORKING Dorking Halls: WILDER
EARLSWOOD Railway Inn: TONGE
EASTBOURNE Kings Country Club: GUYS & DOLLS
HARTLEPOOL (Seaton Carew) Staincliff Hotel: BRIAN DEWHURST/TOM TIDDLER'S GROUND
HUDDERSFIELD Ivanhoe's: HEAVY METAL KIDS/NUTZ
LINCOLN Cranwell Hall: MAGNUM OPUS II
LONDON CAMDEN Brecknock: BONE IDOL
LONDON CAMDEN Dingwalls: D. D. DOUGLAS /RAW FUNK
LONDON DRURY LANE New London Theatre: BRUCE FORSYTH
LONDON ENFIELD Salisbury Arms: BETHNAL
LONDON EUSTON RD. Bettina's: SLUG ADDICT
LONDON HAMMERSMITH Red Cow: STRANGLERS
LONDON HIGHGATE Wellington: LEE KOSMIN BAND
LONDON ISLINGTON Hope & Anchor: PLUMMET AIRLINES
LONDON ISLINGTON Kings Head: CAMDEN GOODS
LONDON KENSINGTON Olympia: BAD COMPANY / NAZARETH / RONNIE LANE'S SLIM CHANCE / PRETTY THINGS / BE-BOP DELUXE / CHARLIE
LONDON LEYTON Blackbirds Folk Club: CROWDY CRAWN
LONDON REGENTS PK. The Howff: HI-TONES
MATLOCK Black Rocks: MOTOR RAT
RISLEY Blue Ball: CRAZY CAVAN & THE RHYTHM ROCKERS
SPALDING Bourne Corn Exchange: ROSKO ROAD SHOW
SUTTON-IN-ASHFIELD Golden Diamond: HOBO
WEYMOUTH Steering Wheel Club: TEQUILA

SATURDAY

AMMANFORD Civic Centre: WITHERED MAN
ASHBOURNE Mayfield Parish Hall: ROCKING PNEUMONIA
BIRMINGHAM The Railway: BEAU FLYER
BRIGHTON Alhambra: STRANGLERS
BRISTOL Colston Hall: PROCOL HARUM
BUBWITH Cross Keys: BRIAN DEWHURST/TOM TIDDLER'S GROUND
CARDIFF Tito's Club: WISPER
CODSAL Crown Inn: CHRIS BARBER BLUES BAND
EASTBOURNE Kings Country Club: GUYS & DOLLS
HUDDERSFIELD Golcar Social Club: MATCHBOX
LONDON CAMDEN Dingwalls: JOHN STEVENS AWAY/LEE KOSMIN BAND
LONDON EUSTON RD. Bettina's: COBRA
LONDON HAMMERSMITH Red Cow: COUNT BISHOPS
LONDON ISLINGTON Hope & Anchor: CAFE SOCIETY
LONDON KENSINGTON Olympia: BAD COMPANY/NAZARETH/RONNIE LANE'S SLIM CHANCE/PRETTY THINGS/BE-BOP DELUXE-/CHARLIE
LONDON KENSINGTON The Nashville: G. T. MOORE & THE REGGAE GUITARS
LONDON REGENTS PK. The Howff: HI-TONES
LONDON W.14. The Kensington: PLUMMET AIRLINES
MANCHESTER (Didsbury) Midland Hotel: CRAZY CAVAN & THE RHYTHM ROCKERS
MATLOCK Black Rocks: SLACK ALICE
SHEFFIELD Woodseats WMC: BAND CALLED CHARLIE
SPALDING Peele School: ROSKO ROAD SHOW
TORKSEY Castle Inn: RIOT ROCKERS
WEST RUNTON Pavilion: BETHNAL
WEYMOUTH Steering Wheel Club: TEQUILA
WIGAN Casino: SASSAFRAS

SUNDAY

BOGNOR Sussex Hotel: WILDER
BRENTWOOD Youth House: JONATHAN TURNER
CARDIFF Capitol: PROCOL HARUM
COVENTRY Lime Tree WMC: MATCHBOX
CROYDON Greyhound: HEAVY METAL KIDS/ NUTZ
CRUMLIN Viaduct Hotel: WITHERED MAN
EGHAM White Lion: O'DONNELL, MARSH & EVERY
HULL Centre Hotel: BRIAN DEWHURST/TOM TIDDLER'S GROUND
LONDON EPPING Blacksmith's Arms: ROBIN & BARRY DRANSFIELD
LONDON HAMMERSMITH Red Cow: 101-ers
LONDON ISLINGTON Hope & Anchor: STRANGLERS
LONDON ISLINGTON Pied Bull: NIGHT LIFE
LONDON KENSINGTON The Nashville: SPARROW
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LONDON PECKHAM Newlands Tavern: LEE KOSMIN BAND
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LONDON WOOLWICH Tramshed: JOHN BALDRY
NOTTINGHAM Boat Club: WARLORD
ROMFORD Albemarle Club: SHEERWATER
SALE Cricket Club: CHRIS BARBER BLUES BAND
SHEFFIELD Black Swan: FATSO

MONDAY

BRENTWOOD Youth House: AFTER THE FIRE
CHIGWELL Camelot: MUSKRATS
COVENTRY Mr. George's: RIOT ROCKERS
LONDON CAMDEN Dingwalls: EMILY SWAY
LONDON HAMMERSMITH Red Cow: MICHIGAN FLYERS
LONDON ISLINGTON Hope & Anchor: ROOGALATOR
LONDON KENSINGTON The Nashville: PALM BEACH EXPRESS
NANTWICH Civic Hall: HUMAN ORCHESTRA
OCKLEY Red Lion: STRANGLERS
PORTSMOUTH Guildhall: PROCOL HARUM
SUTTON-IN-ASHFIELD Golden Diamond: FATSO

TUESDAY

CARDIFF Top Rank: HOMBURG
HAVERFORDRYNYS Rugby Club: WITHERED MAN
LONDON CAMDEN Dingwalls: MOON
LONDON KENSINGTON The Nashville: RACING CARS
LONDON PECKHAM Newlands Tavern: NEIL INNES & FATSO
LONDON WOOD GREEN Fagan's: ROCKY SHARPE & THE RAZORS
NETHER HEYFORD Old Sun Folk Club: PETER & CHRISTINE COE
NOTTINGHAM Beeston Unity Club: WITCHFYNDE
NOTTINGHAM Calverton Springwater Club: MAGNUM OPUS II
SOUTHEND Talk Of The South: TROGGS

WEDNESDAY

BIRMINGHAM Elizabethan Rock: HOOKER
HAYWARDS HEATH St. Francis Hospital: CHRIS BARBER BLUES BAND
LEICESTER Polytechnic: RACING CARS
LONDON CAMDEN Dingwalls: EDDIE & THE HOT RODS
LONDON DRURY LANE New London Theatre: BRUCE FORSYTH
LONDON HAMMERSMITH Red Cow: KRAZY KAT
LONDON ISLINGTON Hope & Anchor: MICKEY JUPP BAND
LONDON PECKHAM Newlands Tavern: NEIL INNES & FATSO
LONDON Upstairs at Ronnie Scott's: CAFE SOCIETY
MAIDSTONE College of Art: JIVE BOMBERS
MIDDLESBROUGH Town Hall: PROCOL HARUM
NOTTINGHAM (Beeston) Three Horseshoes: BRIAN DEWHURST
SOUTHSEA India Arms: MARTIN WYNDHAM-READ

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Week from Sunday
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Week from Sunday, except Monday
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Week from Sunday
DERBY Talk Of The Midlands: FRANKIE VAUGHAN
Week from Sunday
LEICESTER Bailey's: FLIRTATIONS
Week from Sunday
LONDON CAMDEN Nero's Palace: PAPER LACE
Week from Sunday
LONDON Talk Of The Town: RONNIE DUKES & RICKI LEE
Monday for two weeks
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Week from Sunday
SHEFFIELD Bailey's: JASPER
Week from Sunday
STOKE Bailey's: FORTUNES
Week from Sunday
WAKEFIELD Theatre Club: BARRON KNIGHTS
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Week from Sunday

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0060	BEATLES	I Want To Hold Your Hand
0063	BEATLES	I Feel Fine
0071	BEATLES	Hello Goodbye
0704	PINK FLOYD	Time/Us And Them
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0611	MOODY BLUES	Nights In White Satin
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ON THE

Alex Harvey

NEW VICTORIA

THE SUPPORT bend wis dy — erre.

But et rilly was a ges ta be therre.

Me and ma mates wis rilly fachin' oot a et, what wi' Christmas Eve and the office party and a', and well, to be honest, I don't have to talk like that if I don't want to.

We Scots get quite civilised after we've lived down here a few years. But Alex Harvey sends to us back to our roots like nothing else, and last Wednesday he was on top form.

He entered in a very amusing little outfit of smoking jacket and pigtail, and after he'd commended Blast Furnace And The Heatwaves to us (and honestly, you should have **seen** them, but I hear Alex is going to write about them himself so maybe I'd better not say any more). Well, then he pulled the rosette off this huge box thing that covered the stage and was got up to look like a Christmas present, and the front of it swung open and there was the Sensational Band, in a set got up to look like a brick walled junkyard, and from then on it was uphill all the way.

The thing about Harvey is that while he does awaken that particularly Scottish brand of partisanship in his hearers (who all become Scotsmen for the night, as it were), he doesn't just rely on that to see him through.

He has the inventiveness that all good stage shows depend on — every lick a different trick, as you might say — and his hour and a half or two hours included not only old favourites like "The Temptations Of St Anthony" and "Gang Bang" — during which he invited a host of young ladies up onstage to sing along — but also a Talent Contest wherein Zal Cleminson tap danced and recited "To be or not to be" (simultaneously), and someone masquerading as "The Young Lord Longford" hulahooped in a crash helmet.

Cleminson, as usual, came second only to Harvey in the stardom stakes, particularly notable as he was during a solo acoustic guitar song called "April Kisses" or some such.

This interval required him to climb a precariously tall section of scaffolding and negotiate with Harvey, peering through a window even higher above the stage, for the use of his own guitar, before he perched on a teetering spotlit plank to play. What one especially likes about the chap is his ability to carry off this mime stuff (and this bit of clowing was terrifically like some fifties Hollywood tribute to the silent cinema) without indulging in what Miss Pauline Kael the film critic has dubbed

Harvey gets a bum's rush. *Pic: CHALKIE DAVIES*

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Day Tripper/We Can Work It Out
Hey Jude
Penny Lane
A Hard Day's Night
Come Together
The Long And Winding Road
Help
Let It Be
All You Need Is Love
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Chicken Shack—I'd Rather Go Blind
Terry Jacks—Season in the Sun
Rufus Thomas—Funky Chicken
Curtis Mayfield—Move On Up
Timmy Thomas—Why Can't We Live Together

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5. **Stylistics**—Funky Weekend
6. **Jean Knight**—Jesse James is An Outlaw
7. **O'Jays**—I Love Music
8. **Eddie Drennon**—Latin Hustle
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10. **Barrabas**—Checkmate

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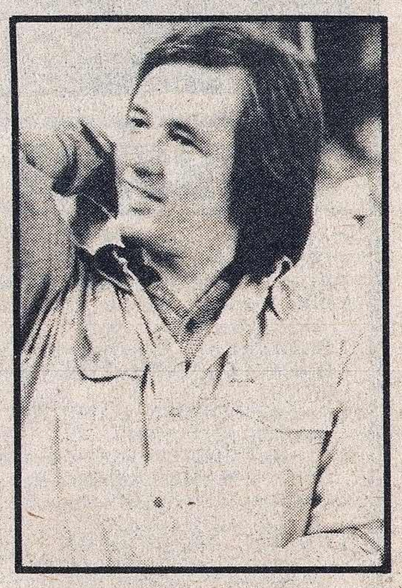


A BIT OF A let-down this week, after the excess or riches during the holiday period. Even "Old Grey Whistle Test" is having difficulty in filling next Tuesday, with only **Andy Fairweather-Low** booked at presstime, and another name still being sought.

Andy also crops up in ITV's "Supersonic" along with **Melanie,** the **Rubettes, Bilbo Baggins** and **Osibisa.** It's screened at tea-time on Saturday in London, but transmission date varies in other regions.

"Impressions Of **Al Bowlly**" is an unusual BBC-2 programme on Tuesday, looking at the crooner who was a legend in his own life time, with **Stuart Damon** portraying the late singer.

TyneTees are bringing back their commendable "The Geordie Scene" for another run, with **Alan Price** showcased in the first edition. Anglia viewers see it on Thursday; Yorkshire, Granada, Border, Scottish, Westward and Channel on Saturday; and Tyne Tees and HTV on Sunday.

A couple of local shows of interest: **David Essex** is in action in London Weekend's morning "Saturday Scene", and **Claire Hamill** guests in "Jimmy Savile's Speakeasy" on Friday in BBC-1's North region.

BBC-1's "Top Of The Pops" reverts to its usual format this Thursday, though at the earlier time of 6.15 p.m. And on BBC-2 on Thursday afternoon, there's a one-off edition of "The Camera And The Song" with **Ralph McTell, Max Boyce, Ian Campbell** and **Jake Thackeray.**

Radio 1 offers **Herbie Flowers'** choice of his "Top 12" on Saturday, while the Sunday "Insight" series this week looks at the heyday of the off-shore stations in a special called "The Reign Of The Pirates". And in Saturday's "In Concert", **Bob Harris** recalls some of the highlights of 1975, including contributions from **Melanie, Don McLean, Loudon Wainwright, Country Joe** and **Bryn Howarth.**

In Radio 3's "Sounds Interesting" on Sunday, there are contributions from **Cat Stevens, Bert Jansch, Prelude** and **Vangelis the Greek.**

Thursday night on Radio 2 offers "Folkweave" with **Shep Woolley, Therapy** and **Mike Canavan;** followed by "Country Club" with **Pete Sayer's** Grand Ole Opry and **Ray Lynam & the Hillbillies.**

Finally, a reminder that **Radio Luxembourg** is devoting two hours on Saturday to coverage of the NME Chart Points Tables for 1975 (see page 2); the top singles occupy an hour from 10 p.m. followed at 11 p.m. by the albums.

And in the small hours of Sunday night and Monday morning (1.30-3.0 a.m.) in Stuart Henry's "Dimensions", Luxembourg will be surveying the NME critics' choice of the top records of the year.

Derek Johnson

TOWN

A load of old Gorbals

Still a sleazy Glaswegian nutter after all these years.

"the beauty of pathos". None of your Marcel Marceaus, I mean.

And talking of mime, the other highlight of the set, as far as I'm concerned, was the enactment of "Gambling Bar Room Blues," with cardboard cutout police car, bar, and blonde temptress. Unless it was the number during which Harvey rubbed shoulders, not to mention points south, with three visions of beauty wearing only Marks and Spencer nighties (front elevation) and nothing at all (rear).

Harvey encored with "Delilah" and "Faith Healer". He really (or rilly) has to be rock's permier — not to say oldest — gutter fantasist . . . as it were.

Kate Phillips

The Who

HAMMERSMITH

THE BLACK monolith (stereolith?) of a PA system towers from floor to ceiling. Onstage The Goodies' Graham Chapman is receiving a hard time from this day-before-Christmas Eve audience, who're wearing expressions of celebration all over their paper-hatted faces.

It's the third and final gig of The Who's Christmas series at Hammersmith Odeon. According to reports Sunday night was great — Monday's gig a little dodgy. Tonight (Tuesday) they just have to blow everybody's heads off.

Chapman leaves the audience with a few select profanities. Seconds later, The Who tumble onstage, Moon cartwheeling, and take their positions. Entwistle, a sturdy glitzy carnival with his sequined jacket, is stage right, and Pete's opposite, wearing a white baggy outfit which looks as if it was pulled on a few seconds beforehand. His face looks decidedly haggard.

Townshend's arms go into action and his fingers make contact with the sunburst Les Paul, introducing the staccato riff to "I Can't Explain".

The music's okay, but not as powerful as The Who can be. Daltrey's voice is shot, not as pure as it ought to be. Townshend's guitar should be louder, but the Entwistle-Moon rhythm section is invincible and pounds along ruthlessly, compelling you to stamp your feet.

Despite these 'defects', spines are tingling and it wouldn't surprise me if there's a few wet eyes in the house. Hell, it's more than good to see The Who onstage at Christmas. All around are faces brimful of joy. I've yet to see a band audience relationship like The Who's; their audiences, no matter what the standard of playing, are always totally entranced by the sheer thrill of seeing Daltrey, Townshend, Entwistle and Moon on stage together again.

It's not as if all present grew up with The Who — looking around at the audience, it seems to me that Pete Townshend has no cause to worry whether he's too old to play rock 'n' roll. He might look a little weary, but the spirit which he and the rest of the band project is as young and as vital as ever; "the magic that will set you free" to borrow a phrase.

"Substitute" follows, and like the opening number its lyrics are as relevant today as they ever were. What's the betting that more than a few guys in the audience are feeling just like that tonight? Into "My Wife", Entwistle's excellent song from the band's finest, "Who's Next", follows, and the bassist's voice is in worse shape than Daltrey's.

The further into the set, the better the music gets, and by the time of "Tommy" The Who are playing as they should. Townshend has gained the power his playing lacked earlier, and everything that has made The Who arguably rock's greatest band is being demonstrated here tonight; the pyrotechnics, the dynamics, the band's attitude towards its audience and its music.

"I'm Free", "We're Not Gonna Take It" and "Pinball Wizard" comes as a feast of power chording, and the energy which flows from the band is almost tangible. The first climax of the evening comes with the "See Me Feel Me" sequence, myriads of 'lazer' beams being projected from backstage out across the theatre.

The audience erupts, spilling out into the near-stage area.

Introducing "Tommy", Moon and Townshend had the wit to send the whole thing up, saying it was a piece of classical music when they know damn well it isn't. Rock opera? Bullshit. Rock and roll isn't about 'operas', it's essentially about energy, joy, and most important of all, communication — and this is where The Who are succeeding most of all.

Unlike Led Zeppelin, The Who cry out for an audience to relate to, and there is no barrier between them and their audience. Mostly they're not about pretensions. They might be a good deal more affluent than their audiences, but get them on a stage and their richness disappears and you know that at one time in their lives, they've lived the kind of life most of the audience are now living.

Unlike The Stones, there's no celebration of evil and no jet-set ambience.

Daltrey might not be such an amazing performer as Jagger, but he is a lot more touchable as he trots around onstage like a toy soldier.

The only time on Tuesday The Who weren't one hundred per cent convincing was during "My Generation". I understand why they have to play it, yet when they do it's as if they realise it's one damn big lie.

Otherwise it all makes sense. Part way through the song the band goes into one of their flop singles "Join Together", and the song is genuinely apt. By that time the audience's inhibitions have disappeared.

The following "Summertime Blues" is true to the spirit of classic rock 'n' roll. Oddly the penultimate number is "Roadrunner", at the end of which Townshend widens his guitar tone, even turning in a few Beckisms.

Their set closes with "Won't Get Fooled Again", a classic post-Woodstock statement. It's played majestically, climax after climax, and perfectly timed so that balloons and fake snow fall from the ceiling as the music bursts into its final crescendo.

Townshend hurls his guitar at the amps and it's over.

If you thought rock was dead at that moment in time, you must have been born in the wrong age. Easily the year's best display of rock 'n' roll.

Steve Clarke

Blast Furnace and The Heatwaves

NEW VICTORIA

Blast Furnace (gtr, voc, harp)
Tron Cutler (keyboards, gtr.)
Scott Curtis (bass)
Blood Red Taylor (drums)

VERY PLEASED was I to see Blast and his boys blow some nice boogie — the kid's red shirt shone brite as he posed and strutted. Mind you, as opening act, they had to put up with the usual hassles from the headliners — no space, no publicity, no decent gear.

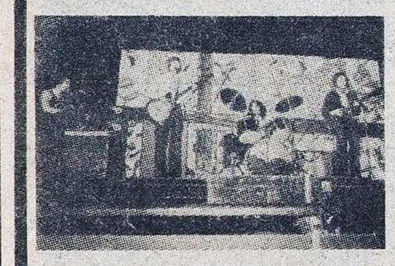
In spite one must admit that the Waves made their mark as a force to reckon with. Beware all groups — your critics are no longer frustrated musicians — myself did witness some of them displaying an ability to play well, and with enthusiasm, something we could all do with.

At the same time I was a little sad to see them turn commercial. I liked them best when their ethics were so sincere that they refused to appear even in public. But already lured by the front page glossies, Tron, Scott, Red and Blast himself, are dangling their talents in front of the moguls of tin pan alley — Critic Rock — The New Direction? I'm glad I have them under contract.

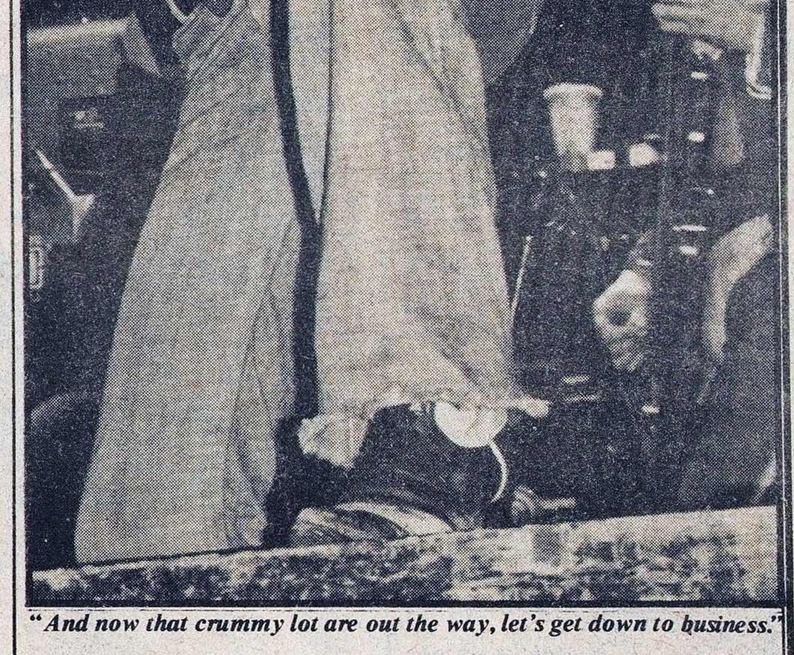
The chaps kicked through a great set of some of their best known hits, reminding me when I first saw them practice on the old sheep farm.

So all record companies, I am now negotiating terms for my artistes — Blast Furnace And The Heat Waves, a new talent, and I kid not!

Alex Harvey
(Sign Here Music)



Blast: the view from Row 22



Pic: JOE STEVENS

"And now that crummy lot are out the way, let's get down to business."

Pic: NEAL PRESTON

Then with one mighty bound Townshend was free . . . FREE . . . yes, free to write another incredibly long tedious rock opera . . .

The Strawbs

NEW VICTORIA

AFTER AN absurdly dramatic entry, this much loved male sextet took their places with a white suited Dave Cousins in the limelight.

The band had stiff, jerky movements as if they were marionettes, with each wooden facial expression and dramatic gesture controlled by a puppet-master hidden high in the catwalks.

The only thing that moved on stage was Cousins' right arm. He began with prissy little twirls, like a vicar stroking a newly grown moustache. The movements grew bolder, becoming those of an out of work Shakespearian actor rehearsing a part till finally he achieved full flourish, a curious gliding motion that accompanied his every word. It was if he had a budgie sitting on his wrist.

Dave's delivery ran the full gambit of emotions from A to B. His nasal English-folkie drawl has become so stylised that any subtle nuance or inflexion is rendered impossible. His folk roots have turned to mannerism. His voice now strangles him in its unnaturalness. Even the traditional finger-in-the-ear of northern folk has turned into camp prancing with one hand behind the ear and the other on the hip.

His mannerisms affect the whole group. They play with awesome predictability. Can they really be such good Englishmen that they keep all their feeling inside? There is little movement on stage. Dave Lambert usually solved with his back to the audience.

At one point Cousins and Lambert seemed to be jerking towards some kind of awful climax, but of course they calmed down in time to stop anything actually happening.

This did lead to one of the few changes in dynamics — a piano solo from John Mealing who, even in a low vibe situation, is good. His dying seagull sound is unique and so is his bubbly organ.

The group looked and sounded as if they had been on tour for months, maybe years, and played with little communication between them, as if they had played it all before so very many times.

They played "Hanging In The Gallery" with acoustic opening, but changed to high drama on "May You Rot In Your Grave". I expected a large lady in a Viking helmet to rush on stage. The audience loved it.

Introducing "Lemon Pie", Cousins said. "This song means

● *Continued on page 29*

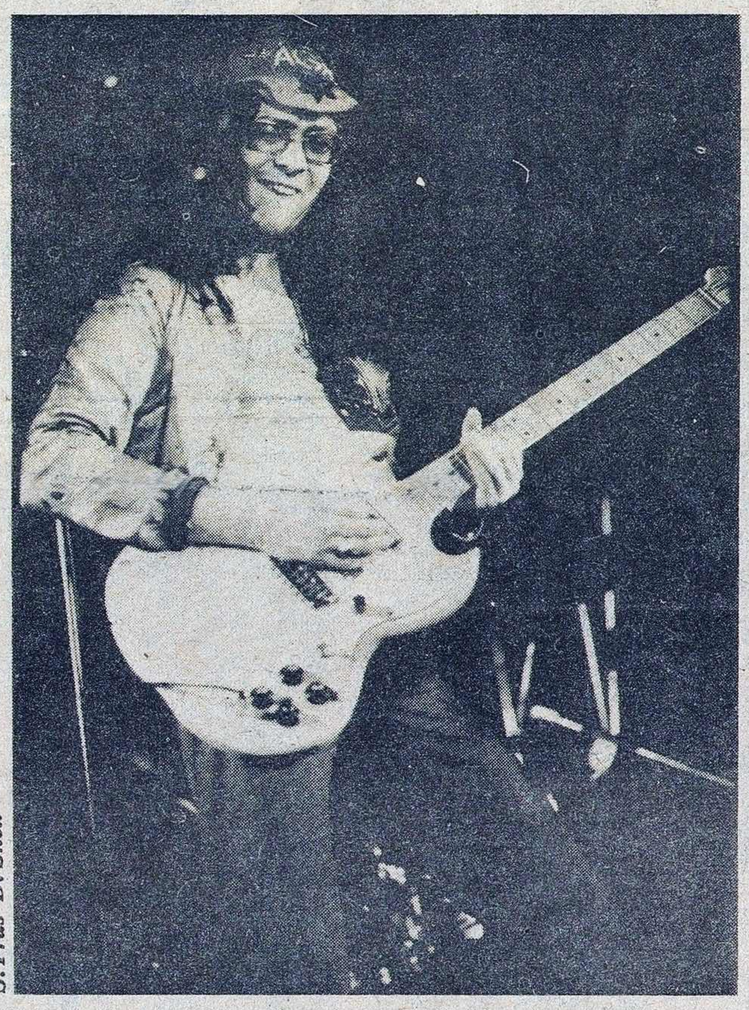
ON THE

Good evening, boys and girls.

Tonight's "Book at Bedtime" is...

A TALE OF THREE BANDS

...and here's TONY STEWART to tell it.



S. Fras' D. Shell

O's Pix

SASSAFRAS played loud... O broke a B string... and RANDY PIE didn't even get their pictures took by PENNIE SMITH

TERRY BENNETT, Sassafras' lead vocalist (nicknamed "Beefy" because of his stocky physical construction), thinks he and his band are going to be successful.

"Well, for me," he says with a Midland brogue as deep as the River Trent, "I honestly think it's a matter of odds. I think I *should* make it, because Ive been on the road so long. I've been on the road for 12 or 13 years, from when I first started at 14."

Perhaps, I suggest as we talk over drinks in the hospitality room of Lanchester Poly, Coventry, that merely shows you're determined rather than actually talented.

"Well, I don't know," Beefy replies, slugging on his Pernod. "You're a better judge than I am. You're sitting in the audience. You're the guy who judges whether I'm talented or not."

You're too modest, Beefy, methinks, maybe burying an enormous ego for the sake of assuming the Mister Nice Guy stance.

But even before such evil notions can be voiced, his Press Representative (sitting in on the rap out of what he obviously considers a Sense of Duty), interrupts.

"*He's* not a very good judge," P. Rep declares petulantly, "because he's only sitting in the audience because he *has* to.

"You've already told the band you don't like them. So you're not a very good judge of whether or not he's talented. The kids who come to see him are a good judge, otherwise they wouldn't come back."

So there.

Looks fit to kill cross between Rep and this writer, while Beefy smiles and squirms, somewhat embarrassed by the exchange. He must know that P. Rep's comments are the usual PR blag, that this flash of puenite indignation is being exhibited because a journalist fails to mirror his own view that Sass are Going To Be Big.

But this is the business of dog-eat-dog, and it doesn't seem to matter to Mr. Rep that Sassafras are only a part of a tour called Hot On The Trail.

They're just one kind of the three-band package deal, the commercial success of which depends as much on the drawing power of the other two, O and Randy Pie.

But more important is the need to maintain an internal equilibrium. Not so much because of any altruism, but of basic friendly competition so that each band can work on what the other achieves with an audience.

But in fact Rep is unceremoniously scrabbling to get all the attention focused on Sass. And for him it becomes a question of blowing a very loud, if out of tune, trumpet.

So welcome to the Hot On The Trail tour. Just as there's a suggestion that individual ambitions are becoming stronger than the collective purpose.

HERE WE have three bands who were previously known as the Also Played. You know the type of thing. Also Playing as support to big guns like Status Quo or Man, Ten Years After or Deep Purple. And then someone decides three fairly well known *support* acts might make a strong enough bill to go out as a package.

So, and perhaps a little chauvinistically, O and Sassafras coheadline, while the German band Randy Pie pull open the curtains and perform while the hot dogs get flogged.

Last night in Hull, where only a few hundred kids turned up at the City Hall, stories of discontent filtered through.

For instance, two members of Sass claimed Pie were becoming too big for their boots by wanting a shot at headlining. Bennett acknowledges this story, having himself overheard a conversation between the Germans where they threatened to quit the tour unless promoted immediately.

"Which is a little bit upsetting for O and ourselves," he adds.

Of course Randy Pie deny they ever made this threat, though they do admit that their billing could have been more equal as their record company is contributing the larger proportion of money to finance the tour.

"But," says their lead guitarist/vocalist Bernd Wippich, "there's a good — how you call it? — *vibe* on the whole thing.

"We stayed in Hamburg and some of our friends said, 'Watch it! These English groups sometimes pull the plug out when you play'.

"We were so happy that there's very good *wibes* on the tour. Everybody says 'Hello. How are you?' "

Randy Pie have perhaps the most difficult and potentially soul-destroying task on their hands in opening. Especially, as was the case in Hull and is again at Lanchester, when they have to perform to a few hundred in a hall large enough to take at least four times that number.

"The thing is," says Wippich in his broken English, "I started to be a musician because I got pimples and I was fat, so I thought I'd be a somebody.

"I went out of school and I just played in bands, played in clubs for about five hours a night every day. And if you do your job you try to make the best of it. And what's the best of being a musician? The best is to go on top.

"So that's what I'm working for."

This attitude is obviously reflected in their stage act.

Dressed in a black suit, his hair brushed back and holding his guitar left handed, Wippich stands in the centre of the stage. A keyboard player flanks each side of the stage, while in the centre the silver suited rhtyhm guitarist Jochen Petersen bends with the rhythms laid down expertly by the drums and bass.

Depsite a considerable ammount of movement and fine playing from middle stage your attention quite naturally goes to the far left, where two delicious blondes are slinking to the music as they add vocal harmonies.

Their style is basically soul funk and rhythm and blues, the momentum maintained throughout the act by the solid drumming of Dicki Tarrach and the beefy bass patterns of Manfred Theirs enclosed by guitar lines from both Wippich and Petersen.

Unfortunately the sound is damp and without any real edge while all the vocal work tends to lose its subtlety in the mix, but the band keep on stomping, and apart from "Highway Driver" which turns out to be a pedestrian rock plod, the act builds up to a fairly high energy level, with the added treat of the two ladies coming to the front of the stage to demonstrate that their asses are as good as their voices.

Considering their numerical paucity, the audience response is doubly impressive.

"I know," says Petersen, a former producer who joined Pie in January '73 when they were starting to achieve success in Germany, "the band will make it one day. I wouldn't have joined the band if I hadn't seen anything happening."

One of the most noticeable things about a package of this description, besides the musical differences, is the various attitudes of the individuals and what they wish to achieve either from the package or as a band.

Pie's Petersen openly confesses he wouldn't play in a pub or club band because the financial reward wouldn't be sufficient to allow him to live in the style he's become accustomed to, and this view isn't too far removed from Bennett's prime vision and purpose in continuing to play music.

"My motive force is two-fold actually," he says. "One, obviously I want to start making some money after doing 13 years ground work. Wouldn't you? "And the other is that I like to be surrounded by people. It's weird. But I love to be on stage in front of an audience. Not so much as an exhibitionist, but I just love to do it."

He has it all planned out, though. Wants a cottage in Wales, a Porsche, a horse and a big dog. And as he continues to outline his ambitions there's one glaring omission. Doesn't he want musical respect and success? (Which doesn't necessarily mean a country cottage etc.).

Doesn't he want Sassafras to Go Down In The Annals Of Rock? "What are your talking about?" the faithful PR interjects. "If a band's big they've achieved respect."

Raising his voice to be heard over his publicist, Bennett answers. "I thought that was self-evident anyway. Obviously we're not going to get on without music, therefore you must have respect for the music to play it properly and to feel it.

"You can't hope to get an audience if you're not feeling the music anyway . . ."

"Terry," the PR again interrupts, "That's not what he's saying. What he's saying is do you want to have musical respect by the great arbitors of British musical respect? Do you want journalists to say that about you?"

"Yes." Beefy replies immediately, turning his attention to me. "I'd love for you to say I'm wonderful."

Silence.

O's attitude is different again.

"I'm not saying I'm mad about the albums or the things we've done so far," says Pix, their vocalist-guitarist. "But I've still got a thing in my brain which I do believe in, which I'm striving towards musically.

"If someone came along tomorrow and said, 'Okay son, the O Band's been knocking around a long time and you haven't sold a lot of records so how would you like to come and front this band? We'll give you a £100 a week retainer for the next six months and we'll get a big show together. And we're going to America with a name band and you're going to make thousands of dollars'.

"It would be very tempting on one level, but it's not the point.

"It may sound weird, I may be maschochistic or something, but I really dig driving back from gigs at 4 o'clock in the morning with my eyes down here.

"I don't give a shit about ten years time. If I was worried about what I'd be doing in ten years time then I wouldn't be in this business."

And to Geoff Bannister, the new keyboard player in O, financial success would only provide a means to improve musically. He doesn't even mention a country residence.

"If you've got an infinite supple of money," he explains, "then you can get all the things you need as a musician. Like, for example, your own studios. And you can go and get all the equipment you need. You can get everything together around you."

O FOLLOW Pie at Lanchester, as tonight it's Sass's turn to close the show. Things, you know, have to be seen to be fair.

In many respects this is a good running order. O's style of music acts as an excellent central axis, being a balance between a style of funk similar to Pie, but also going into some fine rock with numbers like 'Red Light Mama". Which do, of course, hint at what's coming with Sass, even if not taken to such an extreme.

Unfortunately, there's one major drawback, because by putting Pie and O next to each other you get similar sounds which are easy to compare. And O have considerable more feel and expertise, even though the Germans have more going for them visually.

Bannister has worked himself into the band pretty well, taking much more of an active role with lead instrumental work than either of O's two previous pianists did, which seems to give guitarist Craig Anders inspiration to excell, and also allow Pix the freedom to concentrate on his singing rather than worrying about filling out on guitar.

Naturally, then, they have more confidence in themselves, with drummer Derek Ballard and bassist Mark Anders laying down thick rhythms, but in the enthusiasm the subtle contrasting elements of such numbers as

Hammy beefs it up

TOWN

O SASSAFRAS PIE

"Foolin' Round" and "Sleeping" seem to be lost in preference for brassiness.

Material like "Sidewalk Ships" and "Smile Is Diamond" still work, and invariably their playing never falls below a commendable standard, yet coming on with brash rock 'n' roll like "Red Light" and their encore "Doncha Wanna" leaves you with the impression that if this side of the band continues to develop, as it appears to be doing, then energy will eventually overcome musicianship.

Which is something O can ill afford.

Sassafras are the great exponents of blatant rock on this package, but their direct approach is really only compensation for what they lack musically, which is quiet considerable. And therefore it logically follows that they should drive hard and relentlessly.

Surprisingly, they're better at Lanchester than on the two previous gigs I'd seen. Still they present little which is anything other than just more rock 'n' roll by just another rock 'n' roll band.

Ricky John and Congo Jones, on bass and drums respectively, lay down strict stiff tempos, and the twin guitars of Dai Shell and Ralph Evans pump chords over the backbeat like treacle on top of a stodgy pudding. The showmanship and vocals are added by Beefy.

According to some, particularly the PR, Terry is a showman of supreme skill and charisma. But having already seen Wippich with Pie confidently handling his gig and the audience with skill, and the rather sinister black clad Craig Anders in O proving themselves impressive visually, Bennett comes out a poor third.

His main stance is earthy aggressiveness, for which he clearly has the physical appearance. Yet he lacks eighter subtlety and charm as he careers about the stage, up onto the PA column where his silhouette on the back wall looks amusingly anthropoid.

He's almost as physically gross as Chris Farlow. Certainly not the sort of material that teen-dreams are made of.

One hopes.

Still, he's an enthusiastic vocalist with enough talent to put a certain ammount of expression into his work, even if the bulk of Sass's material is basically ordinary, although their version of "I'm The Walrus" works well enough, and there are some moments of enjoyment to be gained from parts of the show, such as Evans and Shell's guitar solos.

The audience, by the way, enjoyed it.

But having seen the package and taled to the bands you still wonder what they're going to achieve with Hot On The Trail. Is it, for instance, merely a commendable venture to give punters value for money by charging less than a quid a head to hear three bands? Or could it just be a means to allow O and Sassafras the opportunity to headline a tour, when on their own it'd be doubtful if they could do the same?

According to Pix this is exactly what it means to him. "This tour is more important to me than any other we've done. I mean, we're playing to less people than we've played to before, but that's not the point. The point is it's a status thing."

Whereas for Wippich, who's not aunused to facing crowds of 6,000 plus as the opening act to Deep Purple, it gives him chance to acknowledge exactly how their standing is in rock.

"There's no point to play support for a big band everytime, because then you probably don't get your feet on the ground. You flyhigh and lose control of everything."

Bennett, perhaps a little optimistically, reads more significance into the tour.

"I think most of the people in England are now generally beginning to pick up on Sassafras. And O."

But will their moments of glory be but brief? Will they be back playing support next week? Certainly that seems to be the case if the attendence at Hull and Lanchester is any indication.

Hammy meets his public

● *Continued from page 27*

so much to me." I wasn't convinced. They churned it out — heavy English-folk rock with no dynamic changes through it does have a nice ending.

"When We were Young" was a moody. Dave seemed to have his hand caught in a cobweb. It's as if all the energy in his body is forced to escape through his wrist. As if all the energy in the whole band trickles out of his finger tip. (Sometimes he sings with one hand in his pocket — its hard to rock that way).

As Dave did a butch little dance to the intro of "To Be Free", the atmosphere changed. At last they began to rock. John Mealing did a bitchin' organ solo. Dave Cousins broke a string. Rod Coombes finally used his double drum kit. The room temperature went up. But it was the last but one number

True they encored, but the atmosphere had gone again by then.

Strawbs will soon be well and truly on the skids unless they redefine their music and intentions soon. There's nothing worse than a moderate band.

Miles

Queen

HAMMERSMITH

IT'S DIFFICULT, you know, keeping up with all the fickle shifts in credibility and acceptability.

It is, for instance, apparently no longer accurate to view Queen as merely the last band to pick up the fag-end of androgyny rock in this country.

The other day (indeed) a friend of mine — a man of no small taste in these matters — was speaking of Freddie and his cohorts as being "The new Led Zeppelin".

Heavy, ehh?

Well, you most probably saw the show yourself on the box on Christmas Eve.

What you maybe didn't know was that the audience had been sat there in the Hammersmith Odeon since eight o'clock with only the Mr Big set to keep them occupied until ten o'clock. Last year, when the **Old Grey Whistle Test** had Elton occupying the same slot, the programme came in halfway through the set. Not for Queen, however. There was a definite sense that the audience were of secondary importance to the viewers.

Anyway, round about ten in the evening — after interminable amounts of piano tinkling and paradiddling from behind the safety curtain, and round about the same time that we suss that the spotlights putting black flashes in front of our eyes aren't part of some particularly seasonal stage set but are your actual Beeb TV floodlights — the **OGWT** theme music starts up and Bob appears in silver grey top hat and tails and the show begins.

And they work so very hard.

If any band epitomises Calvinism in rock it must be Queen.

Freddie seems to quite positively adore the work ethic. In fact, he works so hard onstage that he overdoes it and ODs on his own efforts at times.

He moves about the stage so deliberately, so studiously, waving around and leaning into that absurb stunted mike he uses that every muscle in his body seems rigid with nervous tension.

Freddie doesn't relax for one moment. He seems completely devoid of any natural rhythmic sense and plays his part with the assumption that if he works hard enough at it it won't show.

I caught the show a couple of weeks ago in Birmingham and couldn't figure out what was wrong. Great show, I'd thought at the time. Even told Freddie that. But it was only when I saw Queen at Hammersmith that I figured out what was amiss.

But at least at Hammersmith he didn't look quite so close to breaking into mid-tour tears on stage.

Now all this obvious effort works to the band's disadvantage. Although his singing voice is impressively clear and powerful, Freddie doesn't possess a good speaking voice. His on-stage tone is unnatural and almost paternalistic. The stress factor appears to spread itself throughout the whole band.

Brian May, for example, appears totally unnatural when he takes off with some mild-mannered brain chordings on "Brighton Rock" with the drum-kit spot behind him — the most impressive stage number, notwithstanding the fact that he's utilizing a bastardised "Whole Lotta Love" riffs.

Of course, if I walked around wearing the kind of stage clothes Queen wear — they really do have the worst taste of any of the flash-rock bands — I'd be tense and nervous too.

● *Continued on page 32*

"Not bad Fred, but now let me see you do it with your eyes shut."

Workrate Astounding

But Queen lack midfield schemer . . .

JAZZ DIARY

BATTERSEA MOVES into the cats' home bizness with a programme of exhibitions, concerts, workshops and master classes featuring jazz, soul, reggae and African music.

"Jazz Seen — The Face of Black Music" features the photographs of Valerie Wilmer. Her work covers 15 years of dues from New Orleans to the AACM: the lot. You've probably noticed her name alongside the photos on NME's Jazz Page. I write the text.

All too often, faced with one of her shots of the sound in action, I feel like a spare hand at an orgy. Shot says it all. She loves, lives the music, is a stand-up friend to the musicians, shares with her subjects that intuition for the communication that goes on beyond words. She's followed it to Africa, to the Delta. Valerie's the boss.

There's an exhibition of record covers too, hopefully those great Blue Note pix by Francis Wolff: Dexter in a phone booth, Griffin gawping at a sky-full of geese. Warhol doodled a piece for that august label in the '50s. If it's Peck, I'm splitting.

Bassist Lindsay Cooper is leading his marching band through the streets on the Saturday. Some freight. I've seen Lindsay do most everything with that bull fiddle, except play it while marching. Could be savage jacqueries. Attend.

Also slated, little-seen jazz movies and a chance to sit in with the guvners. John Jeremy's film compilation of stills, "Jazz Is Our Religion", is booked. Most in that genre are reverent tiptoe excursions left, right, up and down some High Kultur canvas at the Academy cinema: this ain't.

The editing techniques are as dynamically deployed as in the commercial cinema to see you, show you, make you feel. The opening recalls *Psycho* in the deliberate closing in from the sprawling city to the one window — here, the location of Alan Shorter's trumper — that holds THIS story.

The photos never pall. The dark shot under the oppressive superstructure of a bridge with the tiny top-left diagonal of sky which, like an emblem for hope, imagination, flight FROM for chrissake, contains a bird, THE BIRD, and on he comes. The neurotic thrust of Bebop is precisely caught in twitching shutterflick cuts from Bird to Griffin.

Drummer Sunny Murray's section is Corman. The camera, moving to Murray's weird time, chops in to the black screaming mouth, the shades, and the whole screen eclipses abruptly

THURSDAY

BARNES Bulls Head:
LONDON W.1 Ronnie Scott Club: GEORGE MELLY/JOHN CHILTONS FEETWARMERS

FRIDAY

OXFORD STREET 100 Club: ALAN ELSDON BAND
STOCKWELL The Plough: JOHN STEVENS/TREVOR WATTS/LINDSEY COOPER

SATURDAY

BATTERSEA Battersea Festival — Jazz and Black Music: LINDSEY COOPER'S MARCHING JAZZ BAND — 'STREET SEASONING'
2 p.m. — in the streets of Battersea
OXFORD STREET 100 CLUB: AVON CITIES JAZZ BAND/BILL BRUNSKILL
STOCKWELL The Plough: BRIAN SPRING TRIO? TERRY SMITH/DICK MORRISSEY

SUNDAY

BATTERSEA Town Hall Community Centre: MAGGIE NICHOLLS WORKSHOP
BIRMINGHAM Repertory Theatre: STAN TRACEY QUARTET — UNDER MILK WOOD, with narration by MICHAEL GRIFFITHS
CAMBERLEY Hot Cat Club: TERRY LIGHTFOOT
OXFORD STREET 100 Club: GENE ALLAN JAZZMEN
WALTHAMSTOW Brewery Tap: DON RENDELL-/BARBARA THOMPSON

MONDAY

BATTERSEA Community Centre: JAZZ AT LUNCHTIME — 12.30 p.m. — record session
OXFORD STREET 100 Club: GEORGIA JAZZ BAND

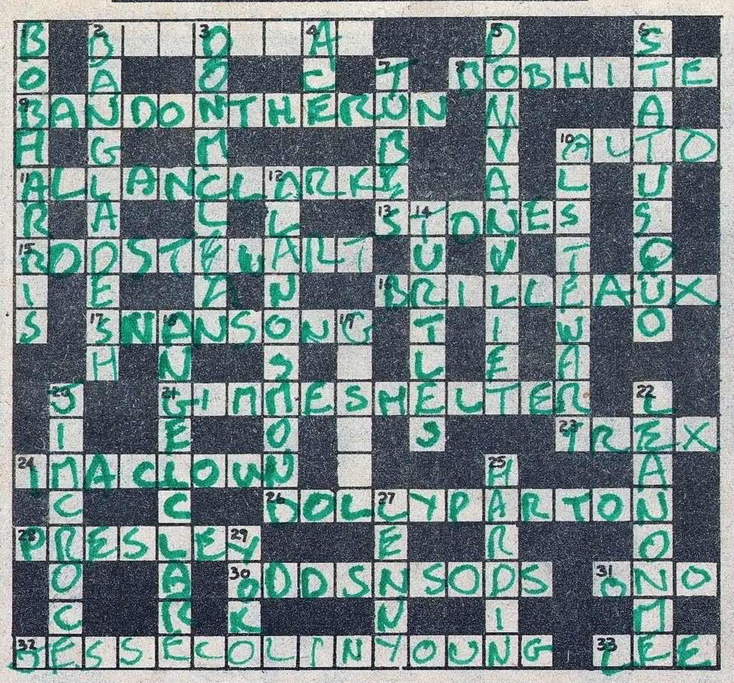
TUESDAY

LONDON N.1 Hackney Jazz Society — Sussex Arms, N.1: ELTON DEAN QUARTET
OXFORD STREET 100 Club: CAROL GRIMES AND THE LONDON BOOGIE BAND

WEDNESDAY

BETHNAL GREEN Rochelle School: JOHN STEVENS/MAGGIE NICHOLLS WORKSHOP
OXFORD CIRCUS Cavendish Square — The Phoenix: JOHN STEVENS 'AWAY'
OXFORD STREET 100 Club: KEN COLYER
PADDINGTON Sarah Siddons School: JAZZ CENTRE SOCIETY — REHEARSAL BIG BAND

CROSSWORD



ACROSS

2 Thunder conductor? (3, 5)
8 Nicknamed 'The Bear', vocalist with C. Heat (3, 4)
9 Result of Paul and Linda and Denny Laine's festive over-indulgence? (4, 2, 3, 3)
10 To L.A. in high voice!
11 Leeds and Hollies striker (5, 6)
13 Bigger than pebbles, smaller than boulders **(Geddit?)**
15 Word treats (anag. 3, 7)
16 See 33
17 The last Led Zeppelin record label? (4, 4)
21 Celluloid record of the downer horrors of Altamont (5, 7)
23 "Hot Love" was their first No. 1 (1, 3)
24 Remember David Cassidy's bopperstar past? **Remember David Cassidy?** This was one of his Top Five hits, and he said it, not us (2, 1, 5)
26 Alongside Tammy Wynette, Bouffant Queen of American C&W (5, 6)
28 Son of Vernon and Gladys, his twin brother Jesse died at birth
30 '74 Who release — and even their old out-takes sounded great (4, 1, 4)
31 See 29
32 Formerly of The Youngbloods, now works solo (5, 5, 5)
33 & 16 Will he be waiting down by the jetty?

DOWN

1 Rob his bra (anag. 3, 6)
2 Beneficiary of Hari The Gee's 1971 all-star gig (6, 4)
3 U.S. singer/songwriter — sounds more like the head of the Gaelic Mafia! **(Geddit?)** (3,6)
4 Four in every deck!
5 Head of the Dutch Mafia! Or El Capitaine as he is known to Customs and Excise — (3, 3, 5)
6 Squats out (anag. 6, 3)
7 Frisco's contribution to the Outrage Stakes for '76
10 Glasgow born singer/songwriter, probably best-known for his "Love Chronicles" elpee (2, 7)
12 Mormon sibling (4, 6)
14 Flo and Eddie's old outfit.
18 If it wasn't the season of goodwill, this clue would read **Artless album;** as it is, we'll settle for **Garfunkel elpee** (5, 5)
19 From which derive in part the roots of modern soul.
20 Former U.S. construction worker died in air crash 1973 (3, 5)
22 Bill Withers offers his support! (4, 2, 2)
25 Tim/. . . /&York
27 For which Dustin Hoffman has an Oscar nomination
29 & 31 Moptop missus

LAST WEEK'S ANSWERS

ACROSS: 1 "Rhinestone Cowboy"; 7 "(On The) Beach"; 10 Gene Pitney; 11 Maddy Prior; 13 Roadie; 14 Neil Diamond; 15 Gong; 16 Collins; 18 Collin Blunstone; 21 Gerry; 22 "Layla"; 24 Eno; 26 "Godspell"; 29 Them; 31 "Get It On"; 33 Vinegar Joe; 35 "Pretty Flamingo"; 38 Otis (Redding); 39 Nelson; 40 Dulcimer; 41 Donny; 43 Ian Hunter; 45 Sedaka; 50 & 51 Kilburn and the High Roads. DOWN: 1 Roger Scott; 2 Ian MacLagan; 3 "Shine On Brightly"; 4 Noel Edmonds; 5 "Ommadawn"; 6 Bedlam; 8 Eric (Idle); 9 Carpenters; 12 "Pin-ups"; 15 George (Harrison); 17 "Judy Teen"; 19 Idle; 20 Bill (Nelson); 23 Atlantic; 24 Edgar Froese; 25 Octet; 27 Phil Manzanera; 28 Levon Helm; 30 Neil (Sedaka); 32 Nilsson; 34 "Jesamine"; 36 Tony Banks; 37 (Mike) Oldfield; 42 Free; 44 (Graham) Nash; 46 "ABC"; 47 (Fleetwood) Mac; 48 "She"; 49 (Brooker T and the) MGs.

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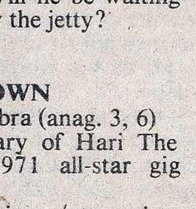

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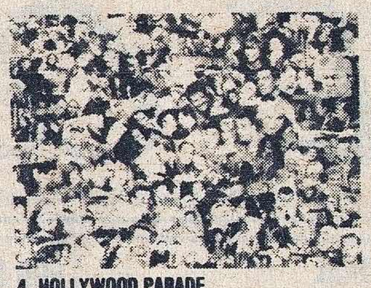
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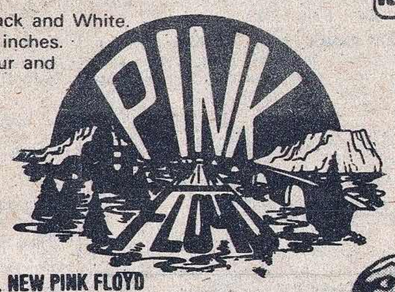
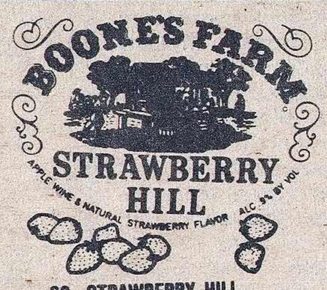


64. NEW PINK FLOYD

57. CRESTA

58. SOUTHERN COMFORT

59. LIE DOWN



60. STRAWBERRY HILL

61. DRINK TEAM

62. CAMEL

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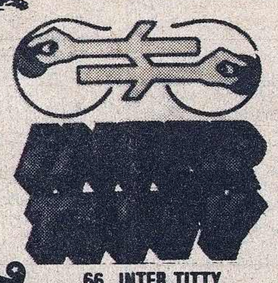
COOLFIZZIN

63. LIPSMAKIN

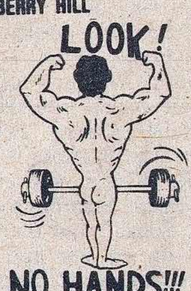
65. COKE


66. INTER TITTY

67. VULTURES

68. GENESIS

69. QUEEN



70. NO HANDS

71. SWEENEY

72. CONTENTS

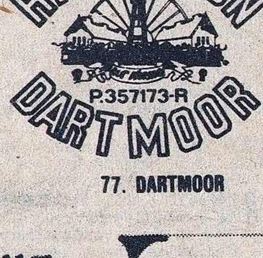
73. HONEY

74. BEACH BOYS

79. WASHINGTON

75. BLACK SABBATH

76. BOOT AND FRIEND



77. DARTMOOR

78. STATUS QUO

93. BOOZE

94. JAMES DEAN

81. LOOK BEFORE YOU MOUNT

82. GITANES

86. SGT. PEPPERS

87. SCREW

89. CAMEL (2)

88. BAD COMPANY

83. TRUCKIN

84. M.G.M.

90. FOX

92. McEWANS

97. HEDGEHOGS

98. MARTINI

99. NEW ZEPPELIN

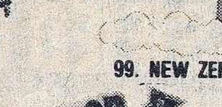
100. BLOOD

101. FORD MURDERS

102. ROLLERBALL

103. TUBULAR SMELLS

104. COLT 45



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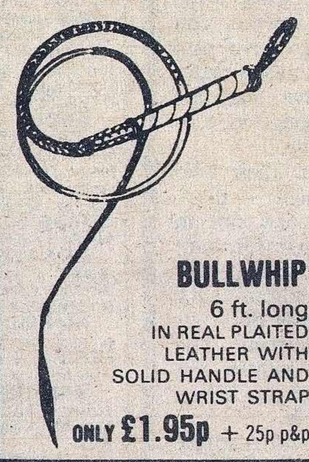
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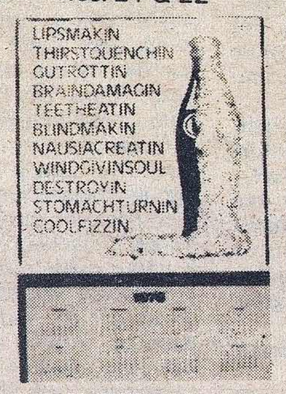

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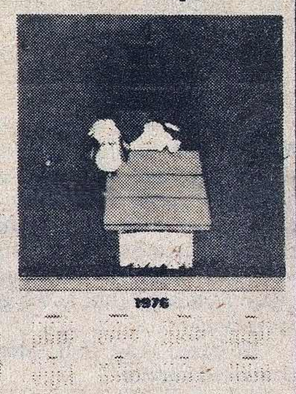

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TOWN

● *Continued from page 29*

Queen's main problem, though, is that without their binding the whole caboodle together with musical effect after musical effect and visual effect after visual effect there just wouldn't be anything left.

TINKLE. TINKLE. Smoke bombs. THUD THUD. Solo. Shift lighting. New number. Dry ice. Change costumes. Put Freddie on piano. Form a little intimate cluster by the drum-kit.

But you forgot the soul, lads. You forgot the feeling. You're the coldest band I've ever seen. You got great harmonies and arrangements and reasonable playing but in five years time do you just want to be remembered as a band that had a great stage act?

Oh yeah. And that ultimate contrived encore.

Well, first of all I can go to the Nashville and see any band on any night encoring with a rock'n'roll medley. Secondly, I object when you can't even infuse it with any fire whatsoever.

Yes, of course they all get up on their feet but come now: most of the audience had been there for three and a bit hours already. Don't kid yourselves.

And all that prancing about in your kimono to "The Stripper", Freddie. Knock it on the head. You want credibility and you still come across like an old tart.

Led Zeppelin? You must be kidding. Queen are quite irrevocably Lightweight City.

Chris Salewicz

The Rumour

NEWLANDS TAVERN, PECKHAM

ARE THE Rumour really Pub-Rock's first Supergroup? Some people would tell you so, and they would have their reasons.

As offshoots of the seminal and seldom bettered bar bands Brinsley Schwarz, Ducks Deluxe and the younger but no less expert Bontemps Roulez, the Rumour certainly represent an amalgam of some of the best musicians currently working in London.

Down at the Newlands in Peckham, before an enthusiastic crowd of Rock'n'Roll regulars, the Rumour played with poise and confidence, and delighted what could have been a highly critical audience. Few can have gone away dissatisfffied and the Rumour must now find themselves in the same class as Roogalator and the New Kilburn and The High Roads — London's pride at a time of year when, almost traditionally, the best break off from the rest on the pub scene, and prepare for greater things.

But to call the Rumour a Supergroup is misguided and short-sighted. The term has anyway become desperately devalued since it was coined at the tail-end of the Sixties, but more importantly is that most members of the rock fraternity more cynical, and perhaps ultimately more realistic, regard Bob Andrews, Brinsley Schwarz, Martin Belmont et al is aimiable enough fellows, but ultimately losers when it comes to the Big Time.

A great pity, because, while the Rumour aren't what you might term a 'progressive' pub band, they aren't unashamedly narrow stylists either, like last year's kings, Dr. Feelgood, Kokomo and Chilli Willi.

Quite simply, in their two forty-five minute sets — playing as themselves and not in their occasional role as Graham Parker's backing band — the Rumour made just about every other bread and butter pub outit completely redundant. The Rumour exhibit a subtle, yet complete mastery of just about every basic rock style.

Steve Boulding and Andrew Bodnar hold the rhythms as tight and as tasteful as ever they did with Bontemps Roulez, while around them pianist Bob Andrews and guitarists Brinsley Schwarz and Martin Belmont mold the distinctive, full but supple Rumour sound into authentic and original shapes.

If you don't like Smiley Lewis and New Orleans Rhythm and Blues there's some Chuck Berry, or for the more esoteric there's a little Billie Holliday, some Bob Dylan, a 4 Tops number and a Wilson Pickett original. And should you thirst for something you've never heard before the Rumour'll offer a couple of Bob Andrews' tunes, or Martin Belmont's excellent "Jet Plane", and there'll be as easy on the ear and as effortlessly complex as "Singing In the Rain" and Paul Simon's "Another Man's Floor".

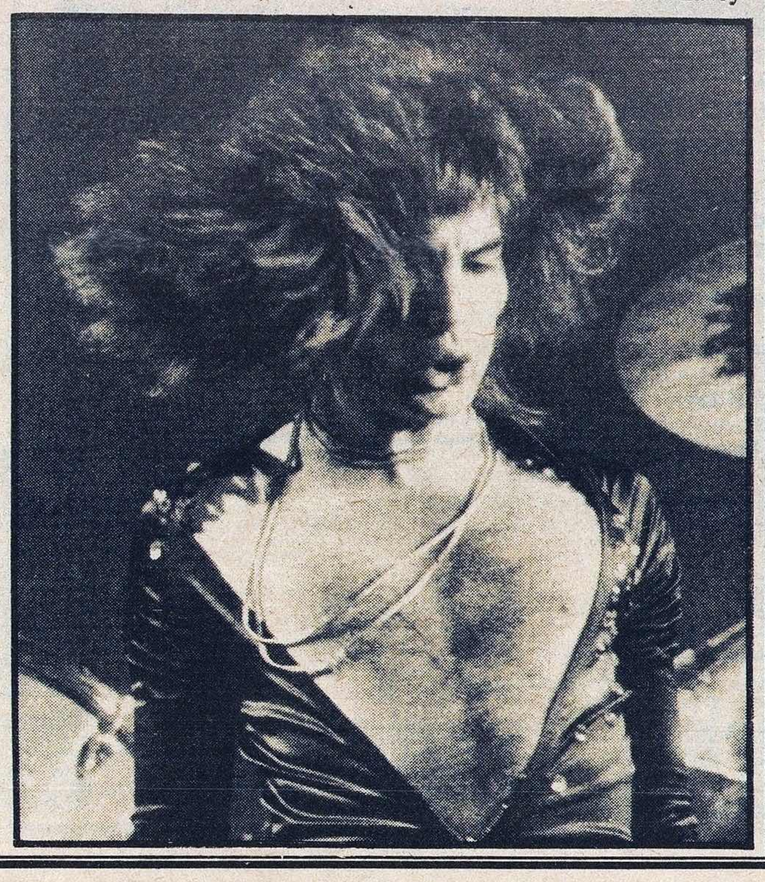
Musically, despite the warm, friendly, relaxed atmosphere they generate on the stage, they suffer from a certain ingenuousness, the same fresh-faced innocence that used to hang about the old Brinsley Schwarz band, a naivety that somehow belies each individual's long years in the business.

Their roots are still firmly embedded in the Tally Ho in Kentish Town, back in those days when pub-rock was seen as a definite reaction/alternative to the contemporary glitter-glutted imagery, and every time I have seen them, the Rumour have consistently failed to project themselves adequately as a potential Topline Attraction (where they ought to be).

Without an immediate stage act and the kind of vibrant Image shared by the Feelgoods or the Kursaal Flyers, without the money behind them that helped Kokomo and Ace on their way, I fear Brinsley Schwarz, Bob Andrews and Martin Belmont will soon rediscover one of the ugliest Facts of Rock'n'Roll Life in these apathetic and cynical seven-ies.

You can't fill halls and sell records on Good Music alone. More's the pity.

Chas De Whalley



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Information CITY

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FOR VARIOUS reasons I've missed seeing *Don't Look Back,* Pennebaker's film on Dylan, and I wondered if you could tell me if this film is still on release and being shown anywhere in this country. I would be willing to travel to any location just to see it. —**D. R. FRANKUM, Redditch, Worcs.**

● ***Don't Look Back*** **was distributed in this country by a company called Fair Enterprises, who handle all Pennebaker's work here. But they state that the film was withdrawn at the end of August '75 because the contract covering the film's distribution terminated at that time and Dylan has since failed to re-sign it. Say Fair Enterprises: "It's possible that Dylan is unwilling to let *Don't Look Back* be screened at the present time because he wants the way clear for the film of his Rolling Thunder Review." Dylan's held up films before — he had his 1966 tour shot by Pennebaker but, after his disagreement with former manager Albert Grossman, took the film and cut it himself, screening the results just a couple of times in New York. Since then no-one's been allowed to see it.**

I'VE BEEN trying to get the new Jet Harris single, "Theme For A Fallen Idol", for weeks. My local record shop, even though they have the catalogue number, keep telling me that they can't obtain the record because they don't know who SRT (the label the single is issued on) belongs to. Nobody seems interested either, so you're my last hope. Do you know how or when I can obtain a copy of this record? —**BARRY BYRNE, Liverpool 7.**

● **The more I hear from readers, the more I realise what a crummy service many of our record shops provide. By just looking in the Industry Yearbook — which every decent record shop ought to have — I discovered that S.R.T. operate from Bankside, 42 High Street, Barnet, Herts. The company is run by George Bellamy, once a guitarist with The Tornadoes.**

WHAT IS Cat Stevens' real name? — **LINDA ROWAN, Claremont, Cape Town, South Africa.**

● **Before coming under the protection of the RSPCA he was known to the tax-man as Steve Georgiou.**

PLEASE SUPPLY the name and address of any official 10cc fan club or society. — **M. SQUIRE, Glenrothes, Fife.**

WHAT TITLES form the B sides of 10cc's "Donna" and "Johnny Don't Do It" singles? Are these records still available? — **MARK ROSEMAN, Baildon, Essex.**

● **10cc's fan club is run by a lady known as Margi, who resides at 11 Yew Tree Road, Charlwood, Surrey RH6 0DE. "Donna" is backed by a Gouldman-Stewart number called "Hot Sun Rock" while "Johnny" is accompanied by a Stewart-Creme opus titled "4% Of Something". Both are still available from Decca.**

IN HIS book *Making Tracks: The History of Atlantic Records,* Charlie Gillett mentions an album called "Dusty In Memphis", which Jerry Wexler produced in 1968. Can you tell me how I can lay my hands on a copy of this desirable piece of plastic? — **GARY FULLER, Basildon, Essex.**

● **Although the original Philips album has been long deleted, Phonogram say they're planning a re-issue some time in '76. This re-release will contain not only all the original tracks but also four other recorded-in-the-U.S. sides, these being "I Want To Be A Free Girl", "I Believe In You", "What Do You Do When Love Dies" and "Haunted".**

IN HIS recent feature on Japanese import albums Roy Carr mentioned one by Donovan. Could you tell me the titles of the songs that appear on this recording? — **KELLY, Brandford, Yorks.**

● **The album, which is called "Live In Japan 1973" and costs around £8, features the Sunshine Superscot's renditions of "Hurdy Gurdy Man", "Only The Blues", "Sadness", "A Working Man", "Your Broken Heart", "Universal Soldier", "Dignity Of Man", "Hey Gyp", "Tinker Tune", "Living For The Love Light", "Josie", "Sailing Homeward", "The Ferryman's Daughter" and "Life Is A Merry-Go-Round".**

AS A TRAFFIC fanatic, I have recently been trying to get hold of "Here We Go Round The Mulberry Bush", which I thought of as just a deleted or rare-as-gold-dust single. However, on the sleeve of the "Winwood" import double-album there is a Traffic discography which mentions a soundtrack album to the film "Here We Go Round The Mulberry Bush". Are all the tracks on this record by Traffic? Is it still available through import shops? And, finally, how much will it cost? — **ADAM BLAKE, London N.W.1.**

● **The soundtrack was issued in this country on United Artists SULP1186 but has been deleted for several years now. Traffic play three numbers on the album — "Utterly Simple", "Am I What I Was Or Was I What I Am?", plus the title song — the rest of the tracks being by the Spencer Davis Group and Andy Ellison. I've seen this album in several London import and deletion shops at various times during the past couple of years, the usual price being somehwere around the £3 mark.**

DEAR DOC, could you tell me if Sandgate have recorded anything? — **GUANO MAGUMBI, Norwich, Norfolk.**

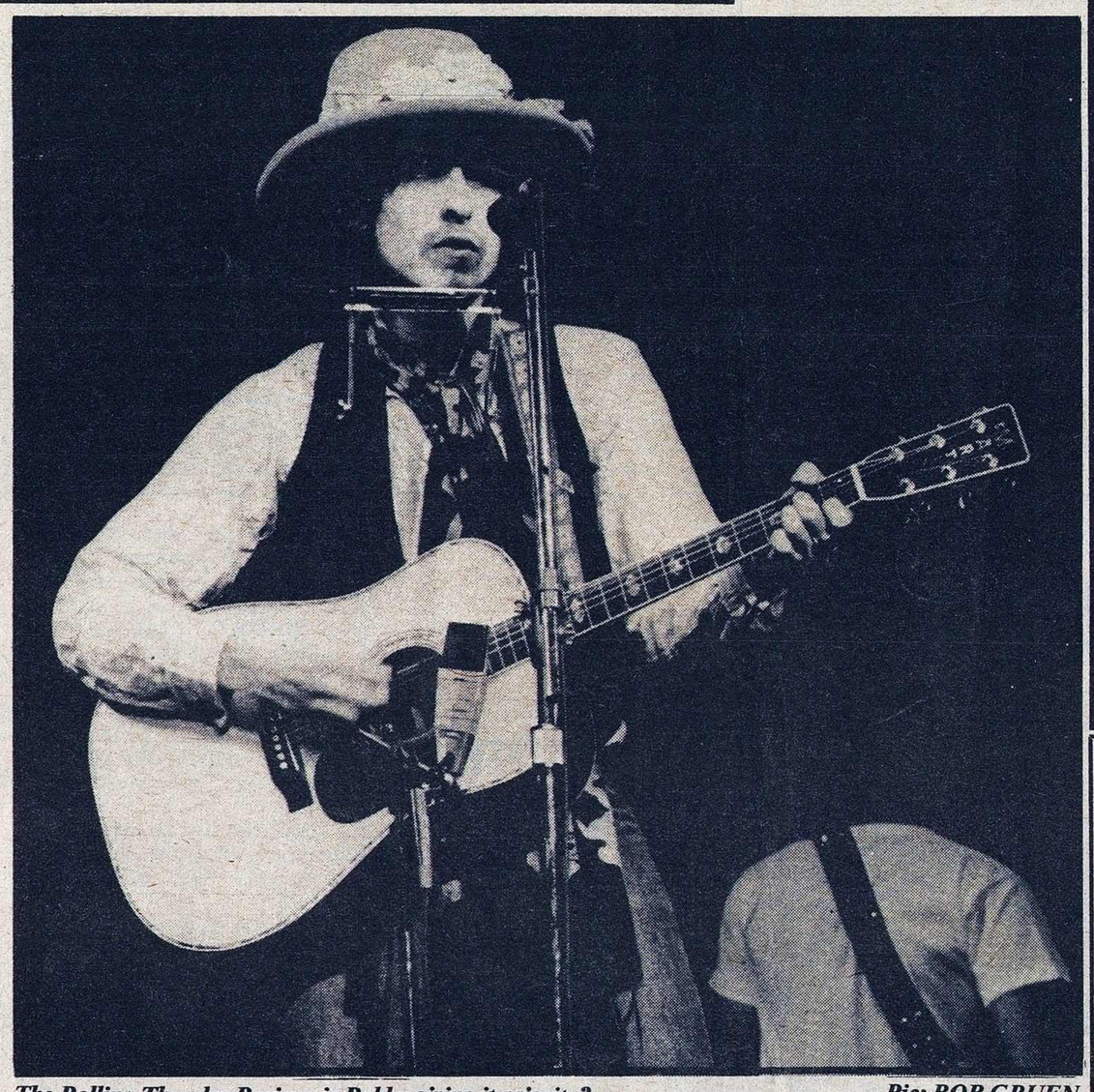
● **Sandgate, a band well thought of in the North East regions of this fair land, did record one single, "A Thousand Years"/"Such A Sad Song" (Dawn DNS1114) which came out a few months ago. But there will be no more because Sandgate, in a blaze of non-publicity, split around 7 weeks ago. Sad.**

IF POSSIBLE, will you list Bill Haley's U.S. chart entries and highest positions attained? I've found this info most difficult to obtain. — **B. COOK, Tunbridge Wells, Kent.**

● **Haley's initial *Billboard* chart entry was "Crazy, Man, Crazy", on Essex, which went to 15 in 1953. After that, Haley signed for Decca and had the following hits on that label: *1954* "Shake, Rattle And Roll" (7), "Dim, Dim The Lights" (11); *1955* "Mambo Rock" (18), "Birth Of The Boogie" (26), "Rock Around The Clock" (1), "Razzle Dazzle" (15), "Burn That Candle" (20), "Rock-A-Beatin' Boogie" (41), "See You Later, Alligator" (6); *1956* "R-O-C-K" (29), "The Saints Rock 'N Roll" (42), "Rockin' Through The Rye" (78), "Hot Dog Buddy Buddy" (60), "Rip It Up" (30), "Teenager's Mother" (68), "Rudy's Rock" (34); *1957* "Forty Cups Of Coffee" (70), "(You Hit The Wrong Note) Billy Goat" (60); *1958* "Skinny Minnie" (22), "Lean Jean" (67); *1959* "Joey's Song" (46); *1960* "Skokiann" (70). Point of interest here is the low number of occasions Haley got into the U.S. Top 20 (just 7 times in all) as opposed to the 16 entries he's had in this country.**

I SAW Bev Bevan in New York during the Summer of '73 and he was wearing a T-shirt which had a picture of Beethoven looking angry while stopping up his ears. Underneath was the inscription "Electric Light Orchestra". Where can I obtain such a shirt — preferably in a medium size? — **LARS KEILHAU, Oslo, Norway.**

● **Bev reckons he got his shirt from United Artist's New York office. I doubt if they've got any left now but I suppose you could drop them a line. The address is: UA Records, 729 7th Avenue, New York 10019.**



The Rolling Thunder Review: is Bobby giving it priority? *Pic: BOB GRUEN*

Dylan stymies 'Don't Look Back' distribution

PAUL BLEY

● *Continued from page 20*

Incorporated, aiming at 12 records a year, and has been stumping London's record companies for an export deal.

"The only way to learn how to make records is to make 'em. It's a serious business not necessarily to be trusted into the hands of the average record company," he said. "It's not a very difficult thing to establish really. You have to talk to ten people around the globe."

Did he still get stuck with bum pianos?

"Every keyboard is different from every other keyboard. When you made a career out of playing other people's pianos, like 61 Yamahas in a month in Japan, it's not a proper approach to expect tonight's piano to be the one you played last night, or you will play tomorrow. I haven't played anything less than a good Steinway now for six years, and I'm proud of my record."

He gave a sort of visionary peer over his glasses. "We're moving into a keyboard era, the reasons being that the choice of keyboards is getting wider and wider. Optimum situations abound." And gave his deep rich buttery laugh. "After all, everything is a keyboard technique today — typewriters, long-distance dialling, IBM machines."

I came up with an incisive closer: "Herbie Hancock told me he can't understand what Cecil Taylor is doing. Can you?"

Paul removed the pipe. He was surprised at me. Mildly.

"Sure. Taylor is a genius. Herbie is not a leader of the avant-garde, so he's the wrong person to ask. You should have asked him about Sly Stone." And chuckled.

SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY:

George Russell, "Jazz In The Space Age" (Decca DL 9219); "Rollins Meets Hawkins" (RCA Victor); Jimmy Giuffre "Thesis" (Verve V8402); Jimmy Giuffre, "Free Fall" (Columbia CL 1964); Jimmy Giuffr, "Fusion" (Verve V8397); Paul Bley Quintet, "+ Ornette And Cherry" (America 30 AM 6120); Paul Bley Trio, "Closer" (ESP 1021); Paul Bley Quintet "Barrage" (ESP 1008); Paul Bley Trio, "Ballads" (ECM 1010); Paul Bley Trio, "+ Gary Peacock;; (ECM 1003); Paul Bley solo, "Open To Love" (ECM 1023).

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ONE KID'S YEAR

THE YEAR of the reggae revolution? Well, not quite — but nearly. Bob Marley materialised from sub-cult hero to national legend, in one mind-blowing visit, "No Woman No Cry" being dubbed by the musical press as, (and I quote), "a classic".

But the whole Marley Mumbo-jumbo was really just a farce as far as I was concerned, as when you get down to brass tacks, (or should I say, grass roots), he's not THE greatest.

Indeed, it certainly wasn't he who converted me from my maniacal prejudices toward Barry White, Gilbert O'Sullivan, funkystuff, and all the other moronic music tastes which I then ashamedly possessed, to this ethnic stuff called reggae.

No, it was my next door neighbours. They'd play it all day and all night. And the one called "Rasta Dread Locks" by The Heaven Singers, and "Ire Feelings" (Skanga) had a tremendous impact on me, and started me on the whole reggae thang y'all.

I moved house, but the reggae stayed.

I purchased ten or so singles, and the albums, "Let's Get On" by Ken Booth, and "Rock The Boat" by The Inner Circle. Yes, the invasion was here. I tuned to Capital Radio every Saturday night (and still do) for "TV On Reggae", a unique experience, and I gradually began to learn about the whole scene. "King Tubby Meets The Upsetter" was my first dub album, many have followed, but no others have quite 'amazed' me as much as that one. The mixing fascinated me, I had never heard anything like it before.

And then came I. Roy, the amazer. His singles "Outformer Parker" and "Welding" knocked me for six, the lyricism was so complex and immediate. I imagined him as some Jamaican God with a thousand tongues (literally that is . . .).

I've bought every I. Roy record since then (and believe me, has he had some released) and none of them have failed to fascinate me.

Yes, he's my all time hero, a truly amazing man.

What appealed to me about the whole reggae scene was that it was very much "underground". Only true reggae "fanatics" know the records, have heard of the artists, and know the shops.

It's a very dark and mysterious cult, and to a white kid like me, those dimly lit shops with album covers pinned all over the walls, and being served by West Indians, was at first, a somewhat creepy experience.

I felt like I was gonna get knifed or something, but of course, now I know the shops it's great, and those West Indian blokes are a damn sight politer and more helpful than some of the drips you find in "white" shops.

I'm lucky that I live in London, if you don't live here, or in the North, natty dread/straight to your head/dubs/version galore/gorgon wise/jestering/mafia/soldering/deejay/dreadlocks, and all the other phenomena of reggae, won't mean much to you.

To me, it was all so strange and exciting for a kid reared on Beatles and Motown to suddenly discover this new and unusual scene with its spontaneous and bubbling rhythms, talkovers and deejay styles of singing. The pre-release scene is something very new to me and I find that equally exciting, though talk about "holes in dem pockets", the prices are a bit silly for a bit of wax.

However, who really cares how much you pay for a disc, as long as its good, and if you wanna get a record before it's released in this country, then that's just great. Record-wise, (apart from I. Roy's terrific sounds), my other faves include, "Caught You In A Lie" by Louisa Mark, which shone a beacon of sparkling light upon the English reggae scene. Also, "Congratulations" by Susan Cadogan (oh, and her terrific new pre', "Fever"), and "What Can I Do" by Locks Lee, "This Is My Story" by The Unforgettables, "Every Nigga Is A Winner" by Prince Jazzbo, "Natty No Jester" by Big Youth, all of the 4 Carl Malcolm singles, (that's including his latest pre', "Right Size").

The list is endless, there were a terrific amount of great singles this year, and Big Youth, I. Roy and the Mighty Diamond were the toppers. But the best single of the year award must go to Joe Higgs on the Grounation label, with his version of "Slavery Days" called "More Slavery", his singing and the background singing is just tremendous.

Oh, and also a 5 star award for "Legalize It" by Peter Tosh (still only available on prerelease on the Diplo label). Album wise, ten out of nine for "Truths And Rights" by (you've guessed it . . .) I. Roy on Grounation.

But apart from the dub albums, and the instrumental albums, (especially "Rebel Rock" and "Pick A Dub"), the "Negril" album was just the best thing ever happened to me, my album of forever, a beautiful experience. And if you haven't got a copy, shame, shame, shame on you.

Finally, my sincere and hearty thanks to Tommy Vance & Co., all the guys at Java Record Shack, Muzik City and Black Wax, and a big hand to Steve at Daddy Kool, for makin' my 1975, dread-full. — **SNOOPY, London, N1.**

Snoopy first wrote to us last June and has recently contributed to our albums pages.

Gasbag

makes its New Year resolution

"I'm sorry. I'll never do it again. Honest Injun."

In 1976 we resolve to take "Deutschendorf" to all our hearts

KATE PHILLIPS lies in her teeth.

I'M SO angry about all the fuss that's been made over John Denver admitting that he's "tried pot".

Personally I do not agree with 'pot' or anything like it, but I wouldn't condemn a good man like Denver for making such a slip.

To make such a big thing out of it when there are so many 'hard drug' takers in the pop scene is too ridiculous for words.

Also, in answer to the review in NME of John Denver's album "Rocky Mountain Christmas", I think it's the warmest, most beautiful album I've ever heard. All his fans will love it.

I don't suppose you'll print this letter. NME seems to have something against "our John". — **L. ROSE, Becontree, Essex.**

● **Now "whatever" gave "you" that "idea"? We "dig" "John" just exactly as much as "John" "digs" "pot."**

I'VE READ some crap in my time, but Charles Shaar Murray's article on 10 c.c. was, to put it mildly, bullshit. If he feels he has to devote two pages to a lot of unadulterated cowflop slagging the best band in the world, he may as well jump into a vat of his own you-know-what!

Why doesn't he criticise amateurs like The Who, Stones, Nazareth, Springsteen and Co?

I hope all true lovers found this article useful as bogroll. — **MARTIN NEWTON, Prescot, Merseyside.**

THANK YOU Charlie for a delightful hour spent in the company of 10 c.c. You realise that I am in total admiration for your journalistic skills, so much so that you haven't left very much vocabulary unused to sodding well fling back at you. Charlie — you know you're so bloody charming that I'd love to hate you, but I can't.

Do you know what, I've come to the conclusion that this is gonna be the calm before the storm, i.e. what you build up must fall down. Judging by this article, you feel that they've exhausted all that is possible within their "self-contained" field, so I'll wager that this new elpee is gonna get a tanning. By this article alone, it's got to.

I'm not going to catalogue all their different songs, technique, lyrical mastery, etc. but I'm gonna say that unlike you, I do feel *moved* by their music. Sure, I thought "10 c.c." was an album of "musical carteons", comic subjects that leapt out of the grooves. Does it really matter how many guitars Eric Stewart overlaid on "Speed Kills"? He produced the desired effect, didn't he? Gawd, I could ramble on for hours about your evaluation of 10 c.c., but it's useless 'cause I could never outwit you! — **MO, Hengoed, Glamorgan, Wales.**

● **Just so long as you realise that.** **CSM.**

I HAVE just discovered that NME is pronounced "enema" in French. Does this explain a lot about French musical taste? — **BORIS O'PELICAN, Clare College, Cambridge.**

I STILL don't care much about Scott Walker's bottom, but one thing that makes 1975 a good year for me was Freddie Mercury's legs, my, my, what a treat.

Beautiful slender legs and feet enhanced by white silky shorts make me "get right to the point!"

So turds to tit pics, let's have a full picture of Freddie Mercury in shorts to please the female readers of NME for a change.

Go on, please! please! (just a little one if you can't squeeze a big one in!) — **ANNE ONYMOUS.**

● **Yes. Your letter gives me the opportunity to point out that on Monday last, *we* (the criticeuses and readerettes of Britain) woke up equal to *them* (you must know the sex I mean). On account of A Sex Act got passed that made our wit, talent, charm and muscles official. So don't ask, darling, demand. You too can be a tank sergeant.**

● **'Ere. . tell me more about this Sex Act. Where do you book it?** **S.C.**

COME IN, Bomber Harris, your time is up.

The show obviously requires a livewire like Charles Shaar Murray. — **ROBBIE BRECHIN. Aberdeen.**

● **CSM would have loved it, but he's just accepted the residency on *Sale of the Century*.**

IF LAST week's Teazer about Demis Roussos is correct then he weighs 142.8571 stone. — **GRAHAM BURBAGE, Cobham, Surrey.**

NME GIVES the impression of being written by middle-class rebels determined not to conform to the pattern of settling down with their responsibilities at about 35. But their "bourgeois" natures show in their pathetic worship of "true" punkdom e.g. the (short-lived) joy some writers showed over Springsteen — like Bernard Shaw's indiscriminate admiration of "the working man".

You're also middle-class in the sense that you can't assess music solely on its entertainment value; however much you laugh at it, your earnest seeking for "credibility" can't be surpassed.

I don't suggest that rock is unworthy of analysis and should be classified only by its danceability or tunefulness, as some of your readers do, but you seem to me too anxious to find someone to believe in — although you always infer that this is a trait of the public. — **JANE.**

IS HELEN Reddy for Bruce Springsteen? — **CURIOUS, Warren Ave., Nottingham.**

THE WHEEL has come full circle.

I seem to recall my festive celebrations last year being heightened by a three page NME Special on the Faces. In it we learnt that the Faces were to record quite extensively. Ronnie Wood had turned down the Stones spot, and the members of the band were all feeling very amicable to one another. But as time told these statements were rasher than Walls bacon and now the pieces have to be picked up.

May I air the following as obvious:

1) Wood joins the Stones and increases already accelerating wastedness.

2) Jones and McLagan reform the Small Faces with Lane and Marriott who are both skint and out of pocket and

3) Stewart goes solo taking Tetsu with him.

Perhaps by next year they will all have come to their senses and I will definitely drink to that. — **PAULO HEWITT, Woking, Surrey.**

I REFER to your article in NME on 8.11.75, concerning Frankie Miller co-headlining with Rory Gallagher at Manchester Free Trade Hall on 16.12.75.

I was at Free Trade Hall and to my great disappointment Miller did not appear, only a folk guitarist who was on for half an hour. I spoke to the manager of the Free Trade Hall and he said that he was not liable to pay refunds for press statements, and that your newspaper was responsible for the error.

I don't think that I am being unfair in asking you to send me £1.00 by return which will help to pay towards my expenses. I enclose my ticket end. — **C. LOWE, Sale, Cheshire.**

● **We printed in a subsequent edition of NME that Miller would not, after all, be appearing with Gallagher. And in any case, we always advise Gig Guide readers to check with venues beforehand, to avoid disappointment in the event of cancellations.**

I reckon C. Lowe owes me £11 for libel! **D.J.**

IT'S UNLUCKY to be called Jim (Croce, Hendrix, Morrison).

Now my girlfriend's scratched my Capaldi album, pulled my cat (Jim's) head off and scratched the paint of my car (a Vauxhall called Jim).

The Grim Reaper knows his stuff. — **JIM, Jimcastle-upon-Tyne.**

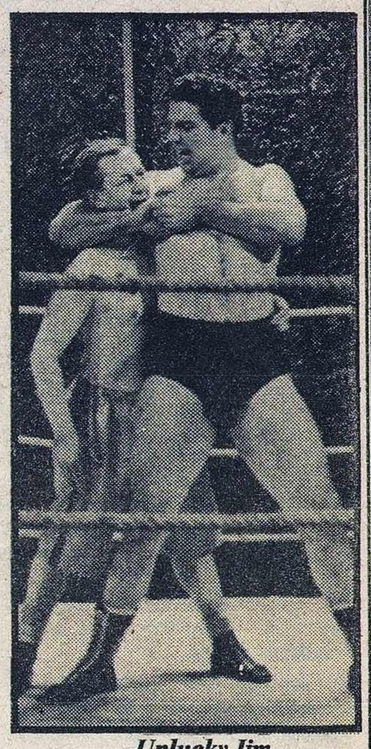
I'VE BEEN buying your biased bloody mag for years now, and I'm just about sick with the bloody thing, literally. — **A PURPLE FEELGOODS FAN, Wales.**

● **And you ain't the only one, cos . . .**

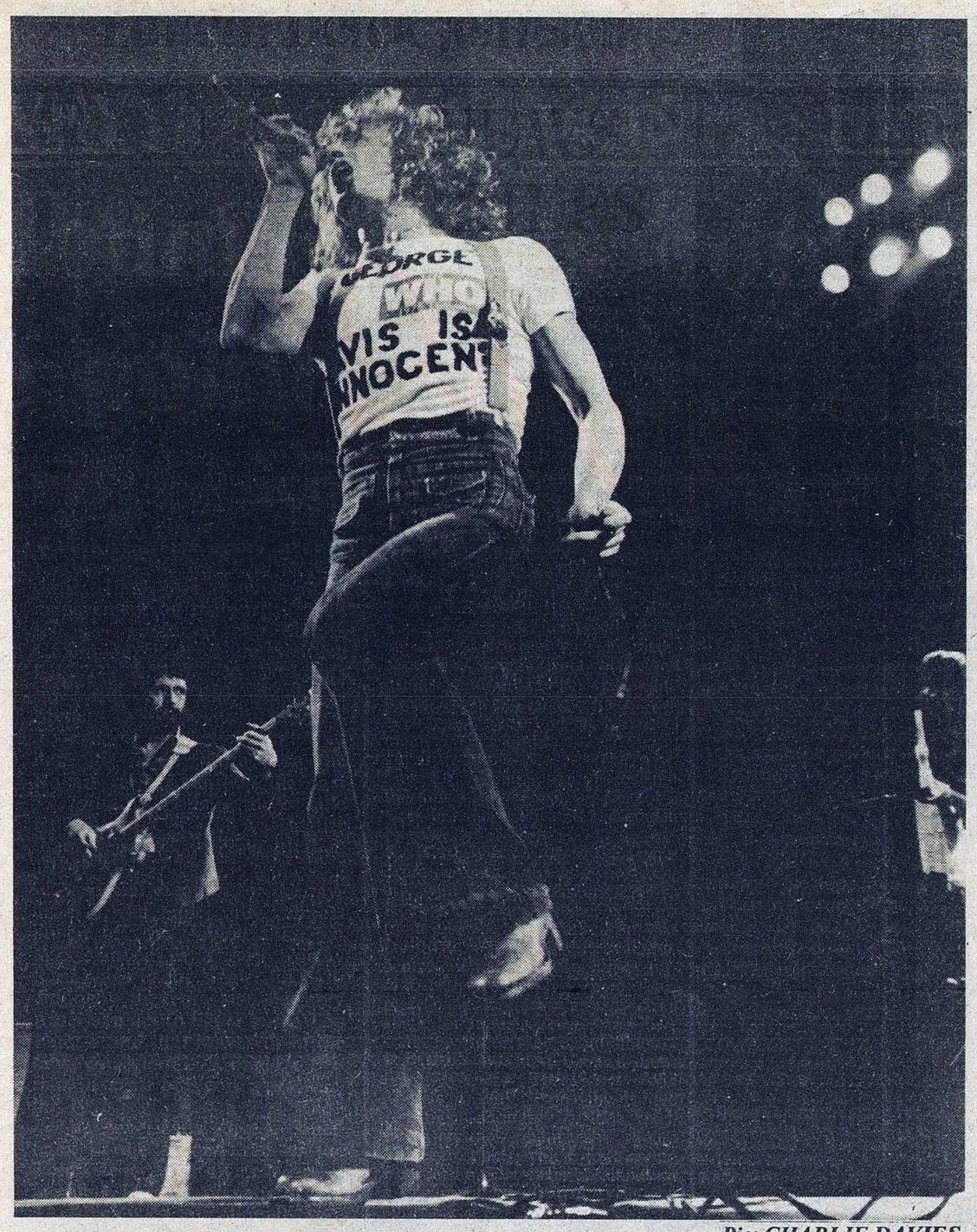
AFTER READING your Next Week Box (December 20), my eight year old daughter immersed and drank it. She was sick all night but thankfully suffered no lasting ill effects.

I am placing the matter in the hands of my solicitor. — **MR. P. BOTTOMLY, Finchley, London N3.**

P.S. Try smoking the crossword — it's much better.



Unlucky Jim



Pic: CHARLIE DAVIES

Bob Dylan might be busily endorsing the Free Hurricane Carter campaign in word, deed, song and live performance, but British rock stars, Lennon apart, have always been loathe to involve themselves even with such quasi-political activities (a subject explored by Mick Farren on pages 18-19).

But now we got commitment.

At last week's 'Oo Christmas gigs at Hammersmith Odeon, Roger Daltrey sported a "George-Davis-Is-Innocent" t-shirt.

Davis was jailed in 1974 for 20 years for his alleged part in an Ilford armed robbery. Ever since graffiti down the Mile End Road — Davis' home territory — has proclaimed his innocence. though the campaign to free him received a major setback recently when the Attorney General turned down his appeal.

TEAZERS

MOVE OVER **Pete Hamill** and **Greil Marcus,** because at last **Bob Dylan** is writing his own liner notes again, for the first time since — since, could it be "John Wesley Harding"? *(No, you're wrong — "Planet Waves," Ed.).*

According to American sources, the notes are terse and characteristically elliptical. We do learn that "we have relations in Mozambique" and "these notes are being written in a bath tub in Maine under ideal conditions."

Rimbaud and **Tolstoy** will be pleased to learn they've been given sales-boosting name-checks.

The front cover features a contemporary portrait of the lad himself, and the sleeve design also includes an Empress Tarot card. **Emmylou Harris** is given the double-bonus of an inside pic and a special thank-you; also grateful acknowledgements to **Jack Kerouac** and **Allen Ginsberg,** who is adding sleeve-notes of his own.

It's called "Desire" and CBS are hoping to issue it on January 23rd . . . On to more big news: the **Blood, Sweat and Tears** tour has been cancelled — **David Clayton-Thomas** suffering from exhaustion . . .

We've just been given details of **Ms. Harris'** own "Elite Hotel" album, to be released January 16th. It includes versions of **Lennon-McCartney's** "Here, There And Everywhere," **Don Gibson's** "Sweet Dreams," **Hank Williams'** "Jambalaya," plus a bundle of **Gram Parsons** compositions — "Las Vegas," which he wrote with **Rick Grech,** from the "Grievous Angel" album, and a couple of old Flying Burritos numbers, "Sin City" and "Wheels" — as well as some new Emmylou songs, like "Feelin' Single, Seein' Double"; more good news — recent off-target single "Light Of The Stable" is not included. Production, as last time, by **Brian Ahern . . .**

Where did the stars spend Christmas? **Bobby The Zee** brought his turkey back home to his family in Hibbing, Minnesota, **Mick and Bianca** relaxed in Rio, **Carole King** was in Malibu, **David Bowie** in JA and **Joe Cocker** at home with his mum in Sheffield. . .

Hold it, there's more about **Carole King.** She's planning a small series of concert dates, mostly Midwestern colleges, for the Spring; no plans for her to come to Britain, but the gal says she'd sure like to. Meanwhile, Christmas week was the 250th. that her "Tapestry" album had been on the U.S. charts . . . **Simon and Garfunkel's** "Greatest Hits" last week celebrated 156 weeks — i.e. three year's worth — in the NME charts . . .

Tax fugitives **Bad Company** now have their next album, "Run With The Pack" — a title that refers to the exodus of British rock stars — released shortly. Over to **Mick Ralphs** in Malibu: "I wouldn't say it's a departure from straight rock 'n' roll, but there is more variety. We're doing those big shows in England and then touring the States in March and April, so I think people will see a broader stage show as there'll be three albums of material to work from. It will probably be a two-hour show, but that doesn't mean we'll be self-indulgent. "I always equate us in a miniature way with **The Beatles**", **Ralphs** added modestly . . .

Also domiciled in Malibu: **Linda Ronstadt,** who's just bought a house there . . . **Dr. Feelgood** to open Stateside shows for **Lou Reed** in April . . . Ex-**SB & O** keyboards man **Peter Wood** has been assisting in **Wishbone Ash's** recording sessions — word is he could become fifth permanent member . . . The intro: congrats to **Gail Coulson,** now assistant managing director of Charisma Records . . . and the outro: **Clive Selwood,** recently returned to CBS Records as marketing director, left the company suddenly last week . . .

And now a para about **The 'Oo.** Backstage at the Philadelphia Spectrum **Roger Daltrey** was searching in earnest for your friend and ours, **Lester Bangs;** seems Bangs referred to Roger as a schmuck in a *Creem* review of "The Who By Numbers". "Tell Lester", said Daltrey, "if I'm a schmuck, he's a schmuck too; takes one to know one." The U.S. tour that finished recently grossed the band three million dollars — the gigs were some of the best for years; Steve Clarke says so too (see review page 27).

Album news: "Captured Live", new **Johnny Winter** album, released this month. It's taken from the Johnny and **Edgar** concerts in California last summer — next there'll be a joint effort. The tapes will be mixed in January, and the album should be out by May . . . Still no immediate release for next **Stevie Wonder** album, but we'll keep you posted . . . Album sleeve of '75 — "The Hissing Of Summer Lawns", right? — apparently inspired by a photograph in *National Geographical* . . . more about **Joni:** when she and **Bobby Neuwirth** returned to LA after the Rolling Thunder revelries, they held an auction at the Otis Art Institute to flog Indian blankets Joni had picked up in Canada . . . What the papers say: according to *Daily Mirror,* **The Rubettes** say maximum ticket price on their forthcoming tour is going to be 40 pee; who's gonna pay 40p, f'Chrissake?

As desserts go by: *Daily Mail* declares **Marianne Faithful** is discussing going to work as a waitress . . . In *Sunday Express* **Mrs. Jones** says she will go and see her young son **David (Bowie)** when he appears at Wembley — "If I can't get a free ticket, I will pay for one"; alas, we heard they'd all been sold . . . Quote of the week from **Les McKeown,** courtesy *Sunday Mirror:* "I have become pop's bad boy, and I don't deserve the title" . . . **Henry McCullough,** of Grease Band, Wings and now Frankie Miller Band associations, banned from driving for two years and fined £100 after he'd turned the crystals several shades of purple — three times the legal limit, the police claimed . . . NME's own **Lisa Robinson** given "Smartest Undercover Agent" award by *Sunday People* for lending her knickers to M. Jagger . . . We cannot tell a lie: **West Ham** pulverised by **Aston Villa** over holiday period; Villa's performance apparently their finest since they won the double in 1897. . .

On U.S. TV **Wolfman Jack** appearing in Clearasil ads . . . In current issue of "Penthouse" **Roger Daltrey** interviewed by former **Shadows** drummer **Tony Meehan** . . . My, these technoflashers keep it in the family: **Pete Sinfield** sells his *Ideal Home* cover Clapham home to **Roger Waters . . . B. Ferry** believed in love. Will a happy **Blue Hair** still be able to write songs? There are those of us who doubt it . . .

Nico dropped by Island Records . . . **Eno, Phil Manzanera** and **Robert Wyatt** having their own studio built . . . After U.S. success of "Red Octopus" album the new, rejuvenated **Jefferson Starship** is hearing offers around the half million dollar mark for the time when — after one more album — their contract is up with RCA. **Clive Davis** and Arista are reputedly showing a lot of interest . . . On **David Crosby** and **Graham Nash** U.S. tour **Caole King** appearing on stage with the two cosmic buffoons on several Southern dates . . .

The reported romance of new, slimline **Karen Carpenter** ("a walking skeleton" according to her brother, hence her recent illness) and Chrysalis records boss **Terry Ellis** is now over — this also means Ellis no longer managing the duo . . .

Latest U.S. chart placings of British singles (courtesy *Cash Box):* **David Bowie's** "Golden Years" — 50; **Foghat's** "Slow Ride" — 56; **Bee Gees'** "Fanny" — 63; **10c.c.'s** "Art For Art's Sake" — 64; **Roxy Music's** "Love Is The Drug" — 80; **Haywood & Lodge's** "Blue Guitar" — 83; **Queen's** "Bohemian Rhapsody" — 85; **Prelude's** "For A Dancer" — 88; **Greg Lake's** "I Believe In Father Christmas" — 96; **Jim Capaldi's** "Love Hurts" — 98.

Top-selling U.S. single of '75 — **The Captain & Tennille,** "Love Will Keep Us Together"; and the top two albums — **Elton John's** "Greatest Hits" and "Captain Fantastic".

Mel Bush has invested £85,000 of his own money in the Great British music fest., according to *Daily Mirror* — if so it seems to us like a shaky investment . . . . Most played record on Radio 2 during 1975? **Judy Collins'** "Send In The Clowns" . . .

Special Christmas edition of **Eric Idle's** "Rutland Weekend Television" several degrees under. "I only laughed once" said normally jocular **Nick Logan** .

Heatwaves split sensation: **Blast** intends to continue with new, improved line-up in face of oppsition of breakaway group led by **Tron Cutler,** who's reforming the quote "Fabulous Original Heatwaves" unquote . . . . Two new Capricorns: a daughter, Nancy, for **Ray and Jill Thomas,** and a son for **Simon Dee's** wife, **Sarah** . . . . **Tim Hardin** recording again, in salubrious Worthing at the Pebble Beach studios . . . .

Currently hot in Iceland: "200 Milurnar" (200 Miles); it's a battle-theme for the Cod War . . **Neil Young's** "Stupid Girl", from "Zuma", apparently not about **Carrie Snodgress,** as assumed, but la belle **Joni** . . .

December 30, 1975, and the **Bay City Rollers** and **Malcolm MacDonald** adorn the front cover of the *Daily Mirror.* Maybe things after all can only get better . . . . happy new year, y'all . . . .

SOME OF OUR HITS OF '75

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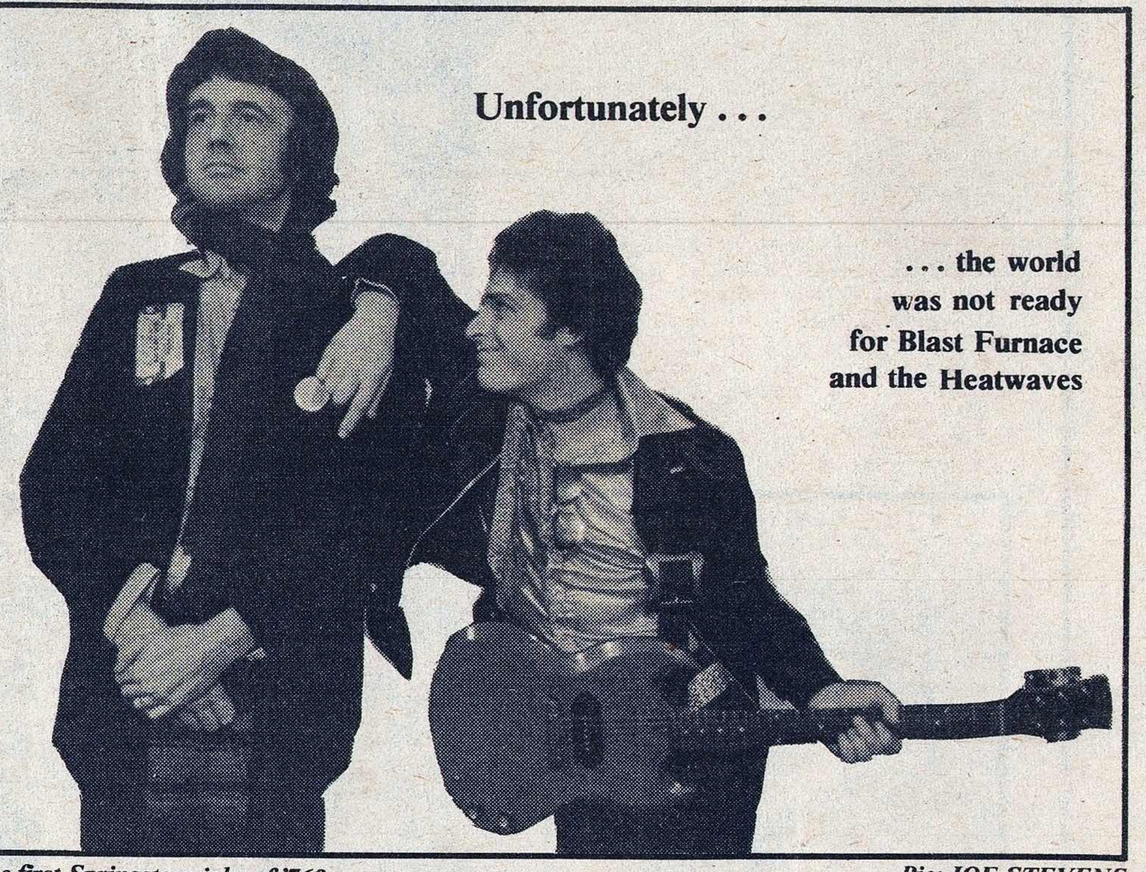

The first Springsteen joke of '76? *Pic: JOE STEVENS*

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